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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THIS Handbook is intended to supplement and not in any way to replace the official Training Regulations and Operational Instructions for the Home Guard, to which in most respects it conforms. It will be found that in general I have wasted little time on those subjects which the Regulations and Instructions deal with in detail, while discussing with practical applications problems about which, for good reasons, only general principles have been laid down.

By and large this third Home Guard Handbook of mine is to be regarded as a personal view (but one based on administrative experience in an active Company) of the task confronting the Home Guard at this stage of its development. I am most grateful to certain officers of the War Office Training Directorate for their unfailing kindness, patience and courtesy in reading my manuscript. While I have, very gladly, incorporated their suggestions and amendments, all views and statements in this book are my sole responsibility.

JOHN BROPHY.

NOTE TO REVISED EDITION

The original opening chapter has been replaced by A Scheme for Home Guard Battle Drill and certain minor alterations have been made in the text elsewhere in the book.

J. B.

CHAPTER I

A SCHEME FOR BATTLE DRILL

BATTLE DRILL has been satirically described as "bad tactics at the double"—and that is what it may easily become unless enthusiasm is curbed by commonsense, and the technique is strictly adapted not only to the purpose (i.e., efficiency in action) but to the means (i.e., the troops involved.) A great deal of publicity has been given to Battle Drill without imparting much information. The main impressions left are that it is a radical new departure in infantry training and that it involves a lot of shouting and much expenditure of blank and live ammunition. Also, of course, that every movement is carried out at the double. Most of these are false impressions and none of them convey, even misleadingly, the essential character of Battle Drill.

First, it is not new. So far as I can trace the story, Battle Drill, under that name, was invented by Captain Liddell Hart as far back as 1917. Second, it does not present us with any utterly novel tactical discovery, any miraculous short cut to the recurring problems of overcoming enemy resistance. Third, neither live nor blank ammunition is essential to Battle Drill; with suitable organisation and safe-

guards they form a part of Battle *Training*. Fourth, the shouting is misunderstood ; it is not, or should not be, intended to excite the emotions but to transmit information during the elementary stage of learning. Fifth, while at certain schools and in certain units of the full time Army everything may be done at the double, anyone who has ever been in action (or for the matter of that, anyone who has seen news reel films of troops advancing in this war) knows that in fact operations must often be carried out at ordinary walking—or crawling—pace.

Now for what Battle Drill is and the purpose it fulfils. It is the training of small bodies of men, on a miniature scale, in a few elementary tactical movements, chiefly attack. It is practice in team work, each man having a different job to do, and the movement from first to last is carried out as a drill. Thus a basic pattern is established and, when a centre of enemy resistance is encountered in action, the leader has only to decide which tactical movement is called for, announce a key word, and everyone in the team knows at least the outline of what he has to do. There must be minor variations, according to the lie of the ground and the disposition and resources of the enemy, but the basic pattern will be thoroughly familiar because it has been rehearsed so often.

The advantage of making a drill of tactics is obvious. In action there is no time to think out

precise schemes, to weigh alternatives carefully, to analyse object and method and resources and so arrive at the perfect solution of the problem. And even if there were time, men who are hot, tired, sweaty, perhaps deafened and suffering from the minor concussions set up by nearby explosions, are in no fit mental condition to think elaborately. In fact, elaborate and protracted reconnaissance, and the formal analysis of a military situation systematically taught as "Appreciation," are rarely practicable to-day. They are luxuries left over from a more leisurely age. Or such, at least, is my personal opinion. Similarly it will be found that the plans for Battle Drill here outlined omit a great deal of the complicated formal movements and the geometric patterns as taught in many places—a kind of animated blackboard diagrams. The reader should investigate, consider, and make his own choice, but I believe that for the Home Guard at least I am right in putting more emphasis on Battle than on Drill.

Battle Drill ensures that a large part of the thinking (not all) is done before action begins, and constant practice means that, so far as possible, the organisation of the tactical movement *in action* will be carried out with speed and efficiency because every man knows the part he is to play, and also the part to be played by other members of the team.

Battle Drill as used by the full time Army is certainly not suitable for the Home Guard, in

which there are a number of men no longer young, and few, owing to civilian occupations, are in perfect training. But the idea—drill in tactical movements—is sound, and I have therefore thought it worth while to work out a scheme of Battle Drill for the Home Guard which units may like to try out and adopt or develop for their own purposes. In what follows, principles should be studied: the details (the composition of the team, for example, and the weapons carried) may be varied at discretion. But once a unit has established the basic patterns or plans for its Battle Drill, it should stick to them and practice them over and over again without any more variation than is imposed by the topography of different stretches of ground, and the problems set by enemy action. Five movements in attack and two in withdrawal are, in my opinion, the maximum required. A key word should be chosen to indicate each, preferably a series of words not likely to be used for other military purposes, such as: Orange, Banana, Grapefruit, Peach, etc. Simplicity and practice are the prime requirements.

The first drills can be carried out on a parade ground or in a hall, thus foreshortening the normal space proportions but enabling each man to see the whole movement in miniature. In the accompanying diagrams the opening formation of the team (seven is a useful number, but more or less may be preferred) is the arrowhead. Diamond,

file, line abreast, or road patrol formation may be used instead, and the men should be already practised in changing from one to the other in response to signals.

A leader and a sub-leader are required, because every movement will require the team to split into two parties. The splitting of the section into five groups, which re-unite differently for each movement, is of doubtful advantage for the Home Guard. Once a movement is well drilled each man in turn must be made to act as leader or sub-leader, so that in action casualties will not break down the movement. During the preliminary or miniature drills, at certain stages the movement should be halted, and each man in turn should shout out what weapons he is using, which of the two parties he belongs to, where he is moving and what he will do when he gets there. This may sound elementary and superfluous, but it ensures that every member of the team fully understands his own share, the share of each of the others, and the organisation of the whole movement. When the full scale drill is carried out in open country or in streets, movements should be at the double only under deep cover and during the final stages if a close assault is intended. A good deal will have to be done crawling.

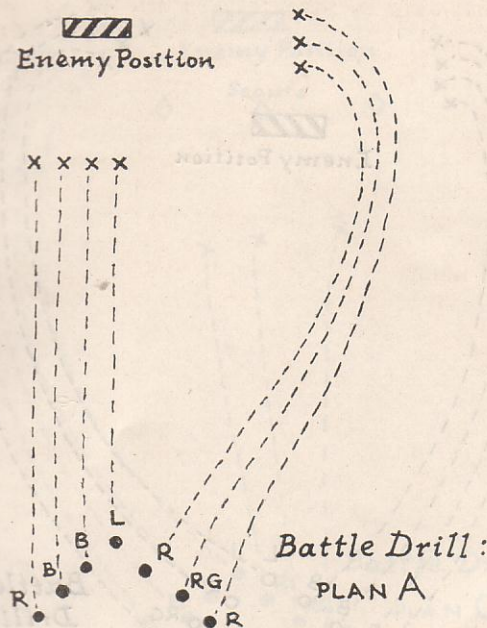
Here then are the seven Basic Plans I suggest for Home Guard Battle Drill. In each, it is assumed

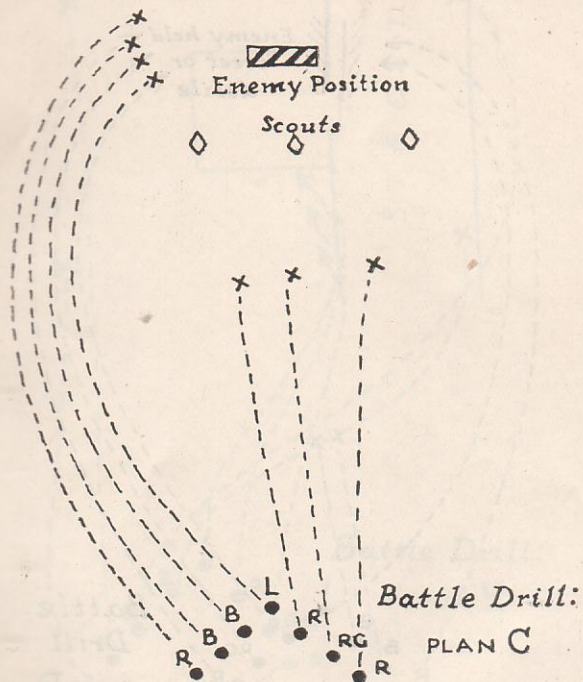
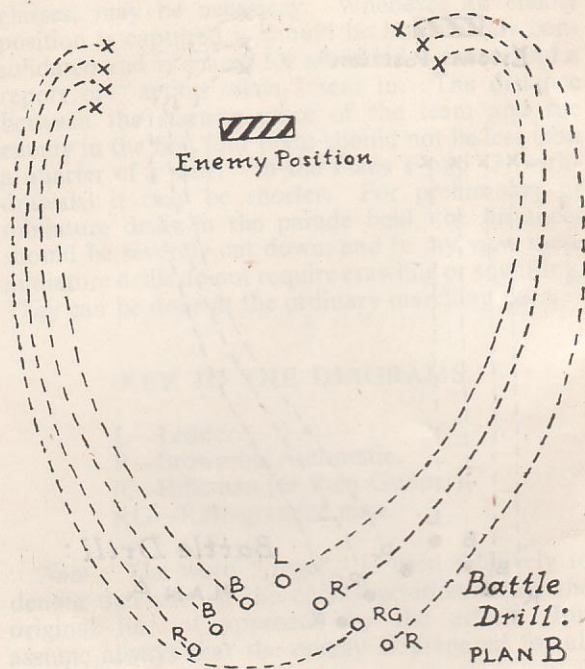
that the precise location of the enemy is not known, and a brief reconnaissance by scouts, with field glasses, may be necessary. Whenever an enemy position is captured it should be immediately consolidated and prepared for all round defence, and a report of "action taken" sent in. The distance between the starting place of the team and the enemy in the first four plans should not be less than a quarter of a mile. In the Plans F and G (withdrawals) it may be shorter. For preliminary or miniature drills in the parade field, the distances should be severely cut down, and in my view these miniature drills do not require crawling or squatting. They can be done at the ordinary marching pace.

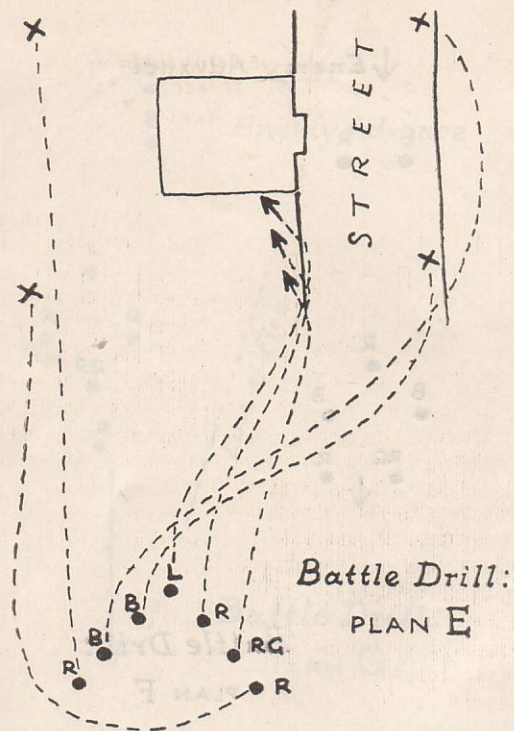
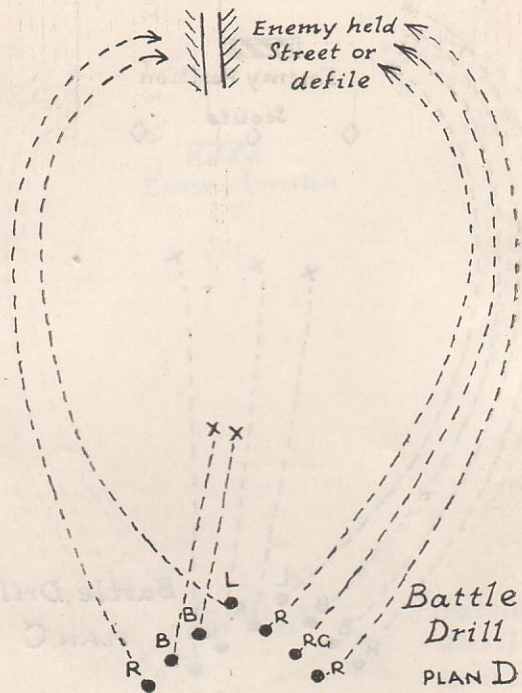
KEY TO THE DIAGRAMS.

- L—Leader.
B—Browning Automatic.
R—Rifleman (or Sten Gunner).
RG—Rifle-grenade man.

Note: The word "front" is used relatively to denote that part of the enemy position facing the original line of approach by the attack. But assume always that the enemy is prepared for all round defence.







↓ *Enemy Advance*

L R

R
B B
RG R



Battle Drill:
PLAN F

B
B
B



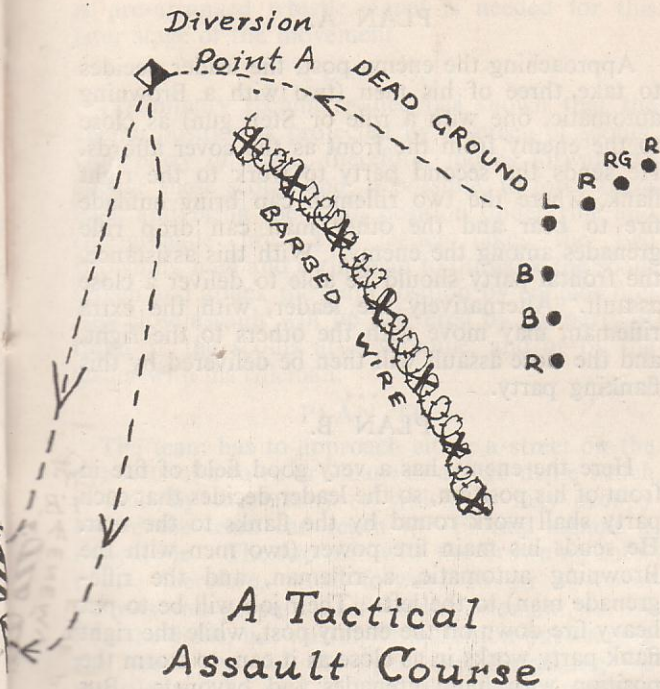
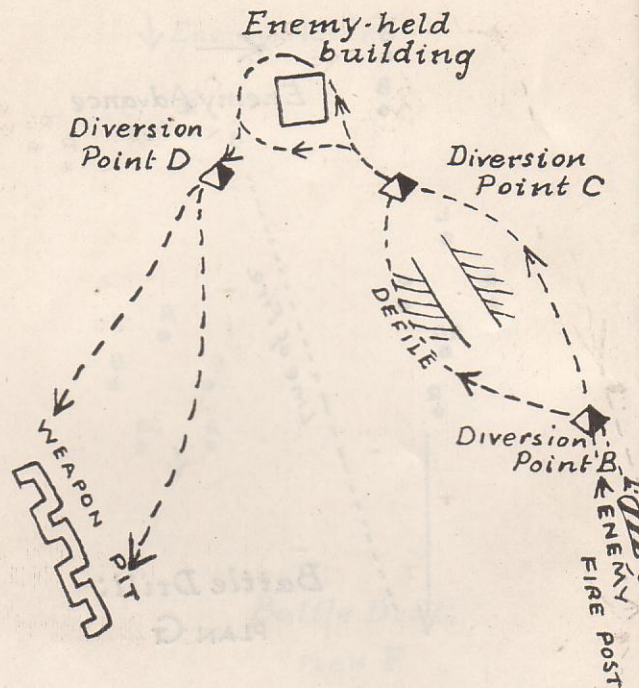
Enemy Advance

L
R R
RG R

Line of Fire



Battle Drill:
PLAN G



PLAN A.

Approaching the enemy post, the leader decides to take three of his men (two with a Browning automatic, one with a rifle or Sten gun) as close to the enemy from the front as the cover affords. He sends the second party to work to the right flank, where the two riflemen can bring enfilade fire to bear and the other man can drop rifle grenades among the enemy. With this assistance, the frontal party should be able to deliver a close assault. Alternatively the leader, with the extra rifleman, may move with the others to the right, and the close assault will then be delivered by this flanking party.

PLAN B.

Here the enemy has a very good field of fire in front of his position, so the leader decides that each party shall work round by the flanks to the rear. He sends his main fire power (two men with the Browning automatic, a rifleman, and the rifle-grenade man) to the left. Their job will be to put heavy fire down on the enemy post, while the right flank party works in as close as it can, to storm the position with hand grenades and bayonets. But note that if the position appears too strong to afford a fair chance of success to a close assault, the leader should be content to harass them from a distance and make them keep their heads down.

A pre-arranged whistle signal is needed for this later stage of the movement.

PLAN C.

Preliminary reconnaissance has shown that the enemy position is protected by a screen of scouts. One party of three, therefore, moves forward to engage these scouts and, if possible, to force them back and bring the main position under rifle and rifle-grenade fire. The leader takes the two Browning men and a rifleman to outflank the scout screen and attack the main position by enfilade fire. Any close assault will be delivered by the party of three, if the scouts are overcome, and/or by the leader with his rifleman.

PLAN D.

The team has to approach either a street on the outskirts of a town or village or a road defile which is held by the enemy or which he may occupy before the team can reach it. Frontal assault is impossible. The two men with the Browning automatic, therefore, move forward so far as cover permits and prepare, at a suitable moment, to fire into the defile, not wasting ammunition but keeping the enemy out of the open and distracting his attention. The rest of the team splits into two parties, one moving to each flank. Neither will fire, unless compelled to, until the houses or the sides of the defile are reached, and there they will use principally the hand grenade and the bayonet.

PLAN E.

This is a basic plan for clearing a house held by the enemy. The team is divided into a Covering Party (Browning gun, spare Browning man with rifle, and two riflemen) and a Clearing Party (all rifles or Sten guns, with grenades: the man with the rifle-grenades uses them only for throwing by hand). The Covering Party moves out to positions whence it can fire on all sides of the house, at doors, windows and roof, especially aiming at positions which command the line of approach of the Clearing Party. The Clearing Party approaches the side of the house with the fewest windows. If the house is one of a row they will try to enter from the roof or the top floor: if the house is detached they will clear one room on the ground floor, then, if possible, the room directly above, and so on till they reach the roof. From there they will clear the house systematically downwards floor by floor, not forgetting cellars. The staircase well is the most dangerous place for the attackers and will be avoided till the last stage of the clearing. The Clearing Party will keep well to the side, flat against the wall, of any room to be entered from inside or outside the house. The first room should be tackled on this method: first one man throws in a grenade, and after the explosion, the leader rushes in with rifle and Sten gun and turns left to the corner nearest the door. The next man follows

and turns right to the corner in that direction nearest the door. The third man posts himself beside the leader. After the first room is entered and cleared, care should be taken not to waste ammunition, especially grenades. The search must be very thorough.

PLAN F.

This and the next plan are useful variations of the usual withdrawal movement under fire by bounds. Here the enemy is advancing and bringing fire to bear from the front. The leader, with a rifleman, stays behind to act as a rearguard, while the remainder retire. Alternatively, the Browning gun team may furnish the rearguard. But whatever disposition is made, the larger party should remember that rearguards are sometimes wiped out or cut off; they should watch their own rear and have a substitute rearguard nominated and ready to function at any moment.

PLAN G.

Here the enemy is advancing from a flank. Alternatively the team may decide to retire at a right angle to the line of the enemy's advance: it should not do this, however, if the enemy is in position to cut it off or if such a line of withdrawal would leave important posts undefended. The advantage here is that the enemy may be led into

a trap and brought under enfilade fire. The two men with the Browning automatic remain behind to hold up the enemy. They cannot remain very long for fear they are surrounded or outflanked, but they should afford the other party enough time to get into position on their right, where fire can be opened on the enemy, inflicting casualties and allowing the men with the Browning to pull out and follow. If the enemy keeps contact after this, a further withdrawal should be conducted on the lines of Plan F or by bounds.

A TACTICAL ASSAULT COURSE.

The standard Assault Course with sack dummies for bayonet-work, and the Blitz Course (as described in Army Training Memoranda) for testing individual initiative are useful resources. But not every Home Guard unit can find space and material for both, and it occurs to me that most of their advantages might be combined in a kind of Tactical Assault Course. It would provide a useful adjunct to Battle Drill and the same teams might be put over it both by day and by night, when different problems would be encountered. The teams should first be turned loose on the course "blind" without preliminary instructions. Later, when the best methods have been evolved, a drill can be taught and practised. The layout and detail of such a course would depend on local topography,

and the diagram (pages 24 & 25) should be taken merely as a general indication of what may be done: the diverging routes show only where the team splits into two parties and do not indicate a precise movement.

The team is started, told to work in a certain direction but given no specific route, and ordered to locate and overcome any enemy resistance it meets on the way. Following the diagram, it will find on the left an obstacle (barbed wire or exposed country will do) but in front a stretch of dead ground where progress can be made under cover by crawling. The first test is to realise this and take advantage of it.

Next the team comes to Diversion Point A. This is not indicated in any way except that fire is opened from an Enemy Post on the left (blank may be used for this). The next test is to overcome this post by using one of the Battle Drill plans (A, B, or C) which is most suitable to the situation.

Next is Diversion Point B, not indicated except by the presence ahead of a defile. This should be tackled by Battle Plan D.

Diversion Point C occurs when enemy soldiers show themselves at the building (a hut will do). This must be captured, and the enemy can be assumed to have grenades, bayonets, and tommy guns.

Diversion Point D comes when the enemy weapon pit is sighted, and again one of the Battle Drill plans should be used for its capture.

Only a token force is needed to represent the enemy, one or two men at each post. They should prepare surprises which may be varied from time to time. The weapon pit and the building may be left empty, except for sack dummies. An Assault Course such as this would take Battle Drill a stage further towards realism, and combine tests of weapon training, individual resource, leadership and team-work.

When the course is used at night, ranges will necessarily be shorter. In the building and the weapon pit, wooden arms, on hinges, padded with straw and sacking, could be arranged to swing suddenly against anyone blundering by. Or they could be operated, with wires, by remote control. This would give practice in the impromptu use of the bayonet in the dark and at close quarters. To avoid accidents, no men representing the enemy should be present where these traps are arranged.

By night also it might be worth while to conclude the course with an attack on an enemy tank lager, or a battery position, beyond the weapon pit, in which sentries have to be put out of action by stalking and unarmed combat, then the tanks or the guns destroyed with the appropriate weapons.

CHAPTER II

TACTICAL RESOURCES AND DISPOSITIONS

Defence Works.—There are two main kinds: prepared defences which, in the event of action, are to be garrisoned and held in the face of the enemy, and temporary or casual defences which may be made use of in the course of mobile operations.

Prepared defences include road obstacles, usually sited in defiles and of some solidity: pillboxes of concrete, brick or other material: sandbagged breast-works (which may, and in fact should if possible, be more than breast high): weapon pits and fire trenches: roadside bombing pits for anti-tank weapons: reinforced and loopholed walls: reinforced buildings or rooms in buildings.

The first essential is that the prepared defence should afford a good field of fire against the advancing enemy. Wherever the ground permits, alternative positions of equal value should be constructed, and a crawl trench or other protected communication should connect each pair of alternative positions. All should be concealed from air observation. Next, it should provide adequate cover for its garrison against enemy small arms fire.

(See *Field of Fire*, p. 37.) Whenever possible it should give cover also against small shells, mortars, hand grenades, observation from the air and machine-gun fire from the air.

Here are some of the thicknesses necessary to provide protection against small arms fire :

Sandbags filled with sand	-	-	40	inches
Sandbags filled with clay, earth or chalk	-	-	36	„
Brickwork, with lime mortar	-	-	14	„
Brick rubble between 1-inch boards	-	-	12	„
Reinforced concrete	-	-	12	„
Loose chalk	-	-	48	„
Loose clay	-	-	60	„
Loose or beaten earth	-	-	60	„
Timber	-	-	48	„
Mild Steel Plate	-	-	1½	„

Cover against hand-grenades in breast-works or trenches open at the top is best provided by wire-netting which slopes sharply like an angled roof. It should be so arranged that the grenades will slide off behind a sandbag wall. If this device is adopted two entrances should be arranged to the breast-work or trench where the wire-netting does not impede, and a sandbag wall built inside to take the blast of any grenade entering here.

Cover from air observation is achieved by the siting and camouflaging of the whole defence

work. (See *Camouflage*, page 41.) Protection from shells, mortars, air machine-gunning and splinters from air bombs is best effected by providing walls of adequate depth and thickness. Trenches should not be dug, where avoidable, in ploughed fields: the earth is apt to expand and push in the sides.

Weapon pits are short lengths of separate fire trenches. They may be shaped with short transverse arms, like a cross; the advantage is that if a tank or airplane enfilades the trench the garrison can move quickly into the transverse arms (or out of them) where the enfilade fire cannot reach them. The same principle applies to bombing pits at the side of a road from which anti-tank weapons are to be used at close range.

Pill-boxes should not be regarded as exceptionally strong defences. They are very good while the enemy is at fairly long range, but if he is allowed to come close, grenades may be put through the loopholes with disastrous effect. A stout sandbag wall should be built inside all concrete or brick strong-points, against the wall immediately behind each loophole. This will use up some space, but will absorb bullets entering through the loopholes and prevent dangerous ricochets. Plans should be made for the garrison to evacuate every pill-box if the enemy forces his way too near; they should

move to an alternative position near at hand, but one of different construction.

Road obstacles should be provided with all-round defence and covered with fire from well-chosen strong points; in addition there should be posts, appropriately armed, *in front* of the obstacles to attack immediately any enemy halted by it. (See *Tank Traps*, page 46.)

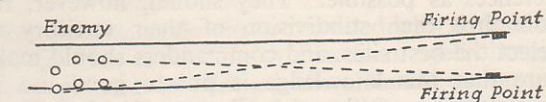
Prepared defences should be protected with barbed wire to hold up the enemy seeking to come to close quarters and entangle him where the garrison can bring effective fire to bear. The wire should be concealed in a hedge or other natural feature; it more than doubles the effect if the enemy does not discover it till it holds him up. The wire should be not less than 30 yards—to keep the enemy out of grenade range—and not more than 100 yards in front of the point it protects.

Temporary or casual defences are intended to be used, usually in open country or woods, if mobile operations move that way. They will usually consist of small sandbag walls, about three feet high, or sandbag reinforcements to a ditch or tank. The danger is that they may be occupied and used by the enemy. They should therefore be concealed by bushes or bracken or turf. As a general rule it will suffice if the Home Guard units rely on their local knowledge to find cover, protection and effective firing positions in the event

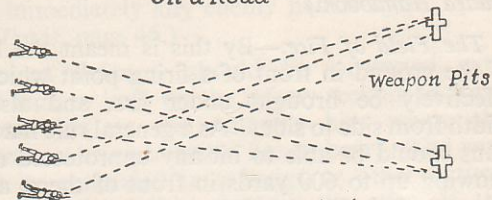
of mobile operations, and erect as few temporary defences as possible. They should, however, reconnoitre each subdivision of their territory to select the best sites, and commanders should make sure that this knowledge is put to good use in field exercises. (See also Chapter IV of *A Home Guard Handbook*.)

The Field of Fire.—By this is meant the length of the ground in front of a firing point which can effectively be brought under fire, and also the width from side to side. As a general rule machine-guns should be able to hit any unprotected enemy showing up to 600 yards in front of them, and to traverse their fire to the same depth through an arc of 180 degrees. For rifles the most effective range is 200 to 300 yards. Ditches, sharp dips in the ground, and houses near at hand invalidate an otherwise good field of fire. The most notable exception to this principle is when a prepared defence commands a street or a road. Here it is only rarely possible (or even desirable) that the weapons should command much more than the width of the road: the idea is that the enemy should be trapped in a defile. Nor is the full range of 600 yards or more essential.

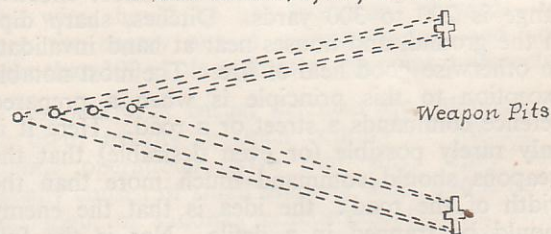
In taking aim at an advancing or halted enemy fire control is important. Only under very exceptional circumstances should the garrison be allowed to select and fire at their own targets.



On a Road

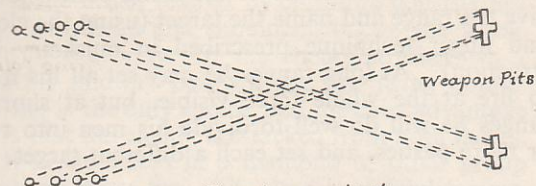


In Open Country against enemy in line abreast, lying down.

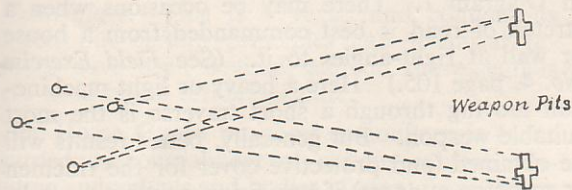


In Open Country against enemy advancing in file.

Diagram 1 The Value of Cross-fire



In Open Country against enemy advancing in two separate files.



In Open Country against enemy advancing in diamond (or other group) formation.

The Value of Cross-fire (Continued)

To obviate the danger of one enemy soldier being hit by three bullets while two others go unharmed, the N.C.O. in command of the firing point should give the range and name the target (using the clock and finger technique prescribed in musketry instruction). At long ranges he may set all his men to fire at the whole force visible, but at shorter ranges he will do well to divide his men into two or more parties, and set each a different target.

As a general principle it can safely be said that cross-fire is more likely to be effective than a straight-ahead aim. Some examples are illustrated in Diagram 1. There may be occasions when a stretch of road is best commanded from a house or wall at right-angles to it. (See *Field Exercise No. 4*, page 105.) Here a heavy or light machine-gun moving through a short traverse is the most suitable weapon. But generally, better results will be obtained (and protective cover for the riflemen or machine-gunners) if two firing points are established one on each side of the road. The diagram shows that a near miss aimed at the first enemy soldier is likely to hit the man behind him.

In open country cross-fire is usually even more profitable. In the diagram two weapon pits are shown, but strong-points, breastworks or ditches would serve equally well. The idea is that the men in each firing-point defend themselves better by firing not at the enemy immediately opposite

them, but at the enemy opposite the other firing point. If the enemy is forced to lie down in line abreast the target offered by cross-fire consists not merely of a head and shoulders, but of the whole length of the body. If the enemy advances in a single file midway between the two firing points, cross-fire is the only choice, and the chief advantage here is that the enemy is attacked from both flanks. And if he advances in a diamond or other group formation, cross-fire will almost certainly mean that several of his men at a time come into the sights of a single weapon.

Camouflage.—This is a vexed and contentious subject, but certain principles and technical resources have been devised, and on the essentials there need be no serious dispute.

For Home Guard purposes camouflage is to be regarded as concealment of various subjects (including individuals and bodies of men) from enemy observation. As there is rarely a stable front in modern warfare, concealment must be sought from all sides—including the air.

Three main methods of concealment are in use, and these may be merged into one for a particular purpose. They are :

1. *Blending the object with its background.*—The khaki colour of the British uniform helps to achieve this, and when a soldier lies flat, "takes cover"

behind a dip in the ground, or observes from the middle of a bush he is putting the principle into operation.

2. *Artificial imitation of natural objects.*—The use of turf as a top dressing for the parapet of a weapon pit, and boughs or bracken spread over a firing point or carried on a steel helmet are examples of this method.

3. *Deception.*—An object may be made to look like another more harmless object; for example, a pill-box may be disguised as a shed, or defence works not intended to be occupied may be erected as dummies to draw enemy fire.

4. *Dispersal of forces and adoption of irregular formations.*—A hundred men spread out in small parties are less likely to be observed (and decisively brought under fire) than a hundred grouped together. If the small parties are irregularly disposed, and each adopts a different formation, the concealing effect is increased.

Bodies of men on the move should observe the following rules :

Whenever possible, move in darkness or in shadow or by covered routes, i.e. through woods, deep lanes, overhung ditches.

At intervals when not on the move and not in complete cover, keep perfectly still. The easiest object to pick out of a landscape (other things being equal) is anything that moves.

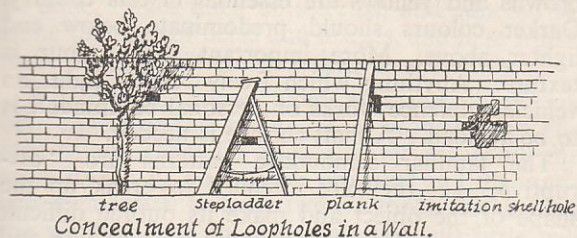
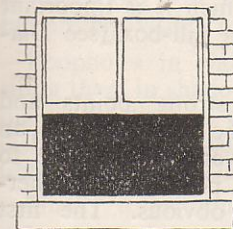
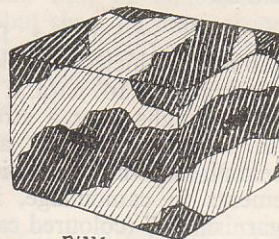


Diagram 2
Camouflage



Window firing point:
Room darkened;
No weapons or sandbags
showing:

Alternative;
Full lace curtains
across Open window



Pillbox:
Dark bands
over loop-holes

Where paint is used for camouflage dark greens, browns and yellows are essential in this country. Darker colours should predominate below and lighter above. More important than colour is texture. Anything which freely reflects light, on vehicles, defence works or personal equipment, is to be avoided. A matt surface is needed.

The familiar camouflage patterns are "disruptive," i.e. they are intended to break up the shape of the object and make its outline difficult to recognise. The pattern must be sweeping and bold, and the darker colour should cover corners and any part of the object which it is important to conceal, e.g. loopholes in a pill-box (see Diagram 2).

Artificial camouflage for strong points and stationary vehicles should be regarded as an additional aid to natural cover. It is futile to spread boughs over a strong point which otherwise stands up naked and obvious. The first essential, and the one which governs all the other elements in camouflage, is the siting. Artificial "garnishing" (coloured canvas strips inserted into nets) is chiefly a foundation, and the vegetation to be found round the site should be used freely on the net. "Garnishing" should be thickest in the centre of the net and thinned out towards the edges.

Positions in open country are easily given away to air observation by smoke from cooking and

tracks made by men approaching them. Tracks should be avoided so far as possible: if this cannot be done, routes must be selected, and adhered to, along the edge of fields and hedges, and false tracks made leading past real positions to a dummy.

Windows in houses used as firing points are best concealed by keeping the weapons and the men to use them far back and by darkening the room itself. If no muzzles protrude and the sand-bag breastwork is built two or three feet behind the window (not on or against the sill) little will show. Lace curtains may be left drawn: the men in the room will be able to see through them, but are not visible themselves (see Diagram 2).

Loopholes in walls can best be concealed by siting them in shadow—but shadows move according to the time of day—or by placing some eye-distracting object, such as a plank or a step-ladder, near at hand (see Diagram 2).

Finally, a few hints for individuals.

Keep away from skylines; find a dip before you raise even your head.

Never cross an open field if you can avoid it: use ditches, hedges, folds in the ground.

Take up a firing position which gives you cover but avoid conspicuous objects such as large trees, sheds, etc., of which the range is easily found.

When not on the move, keep perfectly still.

Seek shadow—and move when the shadow moves.

Facing the sun, keep your head down.

Put your wrist-watch in your pocket and don't carry a white handkerchief in your sleeve.

A dirty face and hands may save your life.

Always approach an occupied position under cover.

Keep the blackout rules very strictly.

Don't carry leaves on your helmet into a ploughed field or a street, or show your leaf-covered helmet against a barn door.

If you use natural vegetation as garnishing, renew it before it fades.

In digging a trench or pit keep the turf aside to cover the parapet.

Tank Traps.—As the essential element in any tank-trap, on which its effectiveness depends, is surprise, this is not a subject to be discussed publicly in great detail. There are plenty of tank-traps involving the use of engineering and ordnance resources not available at present to the Home Guard: these, we may be sure, will be employed by the Regular Army against Nazi advances.

For the Home Guard, however, there is one type, capable of almost infinite variations and local adaptations, which can be used against panzer

detachments numbering three to six tanks with motor-cyclist outriders and follow-up infantry in lorries. Experiment has proved its value. The basic idea of this trap is to force the enemy to halt or slow up suddenly in a street lined with houses or in a defile made by roadside banks.

These are the essentials for a tank-trap in a defile:

A. The road must be blocked to resist the advance of the first tank, and the block must be sited round a corner or bend. (In *Field Exercise No. 4* two blocks are used in the arms of a T road junction.) The aim is to ensure that the main body of the enemy enters the defile before the front tank sights the block and pulls up.

B. This forward road-block must be adequately covered with fire from at least one concealed strong-point (with an alternative position if possible) sited behind, but not usually directly behind, the block, i.e. with the block between them and the enemy. Thus the enemy cannot leave their vehicles on foot to remove the block or overpower the strong-point garrison.

C. Any exits for tanks or infantry from the defile must be stopped and covered with fire.

D. A detachment of the defence should be stationed by the roadside at the end of the defile trap farthest from the forward road block. This detachment must be strong in numbers and armed

with weapons appropriate to its various tasks. These tasks are: to erect, if the circumstances permit, another road block in rear of the halted enemy column, but in any event to prevent the column turning or reversing out of the trap; to bring immediate and decisive fire to bear on the follow-up infantry, especially while they are still in their lorry or attempting to descend from it; and, if the infantry are wary, and stay outside the trap, to put out of action any tank or tanks halted near the site of the rear road block. This detachment, therefore, must have comparative strength in numbers. Appropriate arms for it, besides the rifle, are the tommy gun, the light machine-gun, and the close-range anti-tank weapons. It should also carry smoke bombs (see E below) to lob round the lorries and tanks.

E. At points alongside one flank of the defile small parties should be stationed and given two tasks—to destroy the enemy tanks, as soon as they slow up, with close-range anti-tank weapons, and afterwards to pick off with small arms fire the tank crews as they emerge. It is preferable that only one flank of the road be used by these parties to prevent confusion and casualties to comrades; other things being equal, the left flank of the road should be chosen, because from this position a rifle can be fired up the road without the rifleman unduly exposing himself round a wall or the side of a window. These anti-tank parties should also

be armed with smoke bombs, and one of these should be lobbed gently on to the road between each pair of tanks, immediately after the first assault. The smoke will add to the confusion of the tank crews, prevent any tanks not immediately disabled from aiming their fire, and the dislodged tank crews will be half blinded as they emerge from the smoke.

F. Long-range anti-tank weapons should be posted at some distance where they can fire their missiles on to any part of the defile. After the first minute they will be aiming at the clouds of smoke.

G. Every man (except perhaps those working the long-range anti-tank weapons) must remain in concealment and under adequate cover. On no account, until the last stages of the operation, must anyone set foot on the road down which machine-guns and long-range anti-tank weapons will be firing. (The order to cease fire should be given to the teams working these weapons by pre-arranged signal.) The enemy, as he enters the trap, should see nothing and hear nothing; the rear road block should be concealed and all firing points camouflaged. But the moment the front tank slows up, action from all points should be simultaneous and decisive.

H. If the most suitable defile is too short to contain the full enemy column, a variation of this

scheme can be employed at the forward road block. The motor-cyclist outriders should be allowed to pass the block (camouflaged or covered) and round the next bend on the road, a wire hawser, at the height of a man's hips, should suddenly be hauled up in front of them. They will be forced to jam on their brakes, and should then be picked off by marksmen stationed near at hand. As soon as the motor cyclists are disposed of, the marksmen should reinforce the garrison of the strong-points covering the road block.

The fate of the motor-cyclists, round the bend of the road, is neither known nor suspected by the enemy tanks following them, who are duly halted by the road-block. The closing of this road-block, after the motor-cyclists have passed, must be done swiftly and may involve risks to the man detailed for the task. These risks must be taken. Very often, however, local ingenuity with ropes, chains and other improvised instruments, should make it possible for the block or its essential parts to be hauled across the road by a small party concealed at the side.

I. The operation of such a tank-trap as this is planned to meet an enemy detachment proceeding in the order used by the Nazis in France and the Low Countries. In the meantime, however, the enemy may have revised his ideas. He may, for example, prefer to send his motor-cyclists a quarter

or half a mile ahead. In this event they must be disposed of separately, and all traces of them removed from view, the tank-trap garrisons immediately going back to their stations. He may use one tank for reconnaissance: if so, the defence commander must decide either to let it go through and fall on it elsewhere, in order to catch the main body of tanks, or to destroy it and hope to remove or conceal it before the others arrive. Such activities are inevitably subject to air observation and a detachment should be given the task of attempting to bring down any enemy plane flying very low; apart from this, the concealment of the garrison and the postponement of road-block erection till the last safe moment should thwart air observation. Another variation which the enemy may use is to send his lorry-borne infantry, with or without motor cyclist outriders, in advance of his tanks, which he is likely to regard as more valuable. The only decision here is to catch them in the trap and destroy them. The tanks following up will in any event be much more vulnerable without infantry support.

Street Fighting.—Street fighting is a complicated operation difficult to plan and to control. For the Home Guard it may take place immediately after the holding up of the enemy vehicles in a defile or may be part of the resistance to his attempt to occupy a town or village by infantry attack. It does not follow that the Home Guard rôle will be

purely defensive: the enemy may have to be driven out of positions he has seized, or he may take refuge in houses when he finds himself cornered.

In street fighting deployment is usually impossible: each side must work in small parties, usually proceeding in single file, and, indeed, it will be the endeavour of both to keep out of the street, taking up positions inside buildings or fighting a way from building to building or room to room. Reconnaissance and communications are exceptionally difficult. The area to be defended should therefore be reconnoitred thoroughly now, inside buildings as well as outside, and sections and squads should be trained to act independently. The searching of houses must be done systematically: if possible, entry should be made from the roof and the house cleared, floor by floor, downwards. Otherwise the order is: ground floor, basement, cellars, then the first and upper floors. A guard should be left in the hall, and the searcher covered by another man with weapon ready.

In certain areas the Home Guard will form part of the town or city defence scheme, and their operations, including the fortification of houses, will follow the standard regulations. Camouflage, including the concealment of loopholes and the darkening of rooms behind them, is most important for street fighting. Tanks are at a serious disadvantage in streets and directed artillery fire is

not very probable. But dive bombing and random air bombardments are among the difficulties the defence must expect to encounter. If gas or smoke is used by the enemy his intention will probably be to hold the defenders in position while his main body passes elsewhere. It is also very likely that he will use various incendiary weapons. The Home Guard therefore must be prepared to hold its defences stubbornly, but also to put into effect at short notice the principle of Local Mobility, moving quickly to alternative positions by previously reconnoitred routes under cover.

Almost every Home Guard weapon can be used in street fighting: the rifle and bayonet for searches, machine-guns for commanding a stretch of road, grenades and tommy-guns for house-to-house fighting, smoke bombs for confusing the enemy, and all the anti-tank weapons for assaulting the vehicles in which he may approach.

Fortified buildings should have outer defences of barbed wire covering weapon-pits, with communication trenches back to the building. Cellars should be strengthened, made gas-proof, and used for storing ammunition and supplies. The ground floor should generally be used for small arms fire, and upper floors for grenades, anti-tank weapons, observation and visual signalling. Fire-fighting apparatus should be at hand on each floor.

Patrols.—Patrols should be organised so that

each member performs a different and specific function. This secures the maximum effectiveness and provides all-round protection against surprise. The first man looks to his front as he proceeds, and is ready to fire in that direction. The next man looks to the left, and the third to the right. A rear-guard of two walking backwards most of the time, or halting, if the patrol is on all fours, from time to time to cover the rear, is essential. Diagram 3 shows the disposition of such a patrol for the country or along an open road. At night the patrol is wider spread but not so deep.

A street patrol needs more men because its observation will be limited by the houses, and it is more likely to be fired on at short range. The patrol must proceed in sub-divisions on both sides of the road. One pair on the left will observe and be ready to fire on the houses (all floors) on the opposite side of the street. The following pair, on the right, will act similarly against the side of the street down which the first pair are moving. Thus each covers the other. The rear-guard needs an extra man to cover them against surprise from the front, i.e. their rear. (See Diagram 3.)

Note: on no account should a patrol enter any defile other than a street. A natural defile should be reconnoitred from the banks and with great care.

Alternatives in Emergency.—All good tactical movements are simple and sound, and both

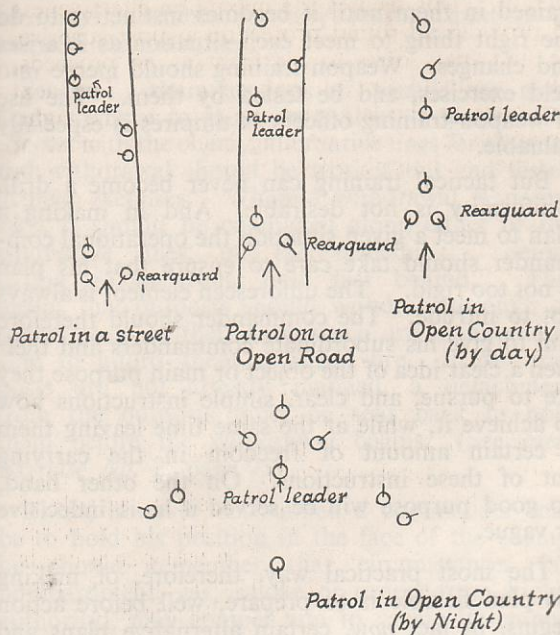


Diagram 3 Formation of Patrols

commanders and the men they command should be trained in them until it becomes instinctive to do the right thing to meet each situation as it arises and changes. Weapon training should merge into field exercises, and be tested by them.* The use of weapon-training officers as umpires is especially valuable.

But tactical training can never become a drill. Uniformity is not desirable. And in making a plan to meet a given situation the operational commander should take care to ensure that his plan is not too rigid. The unforeseen element is always apt to intrude. The commander should therefore aim to give his subordinate commanders and their men a clear idea of the object or main purpose they are to pursue, and clear, simple instructions how to achieve it, while at the same time leaving them a certain amount of freedom in the carrying out of these instructions. On the other hand, no good purpose will be served if he is indecisive or vague.

The most practical way, therefore, of making his plan flexible is to prepare, well before action begins, in fact *now*, certain alternative plans and train every man in the unit to understand that these alternatives may be used under orders of the commander on the spot.

First: fire positions in defence works or covering road blocks should be duplicated, though not

necessarily in the same material. Thus, if one becomes untenable for any reason, another is immediately available.

Second: where sections or squads are most likely to have to move in contact or prospective contact with the enemy, alternative lines for advance and withdrawal should be worked out and tested in field exercises. Where a withdrawal is necessary, it should be conducted along either of the alternative lines, on the principle: "Before letting go in front, hold fast behind." This means that outposts should withdraw through or round posts in their rear which are manned and able to afford them covering fire. If the rear posts are not already manned, a detachment from the outposts must be sent back to hold them before the withdrawal begins. (See *Field Exercise No. 2*, page 93).

Third, however determined a commander may be to hold his position in the face of the enemy, he should remember that circumstances (air bombardment, gas, smoke or orders from higher authority), may compel him to vacate it temporarily. To meet this situation he should make known to every man under his command two alternative rallying points outside his inner defences. These rallying points should be in concealment and under cover. Standing orders should specify one to be tried first, then the other.

In making a way to them men should move cautiously and reconnoitre to make sure the enemy has not already forestalled them. The first men to arrive at a rallying point should prepare it as a defensive position and put out sentries to challenge.

CHAPTER III

SOME SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Local Mobility.—Every unit of the Home Guard has its own prepared defences designed to cover vital points or to obstruct the passage of the enemy. These Home Guard defences are part of the national defence system, and very often are closely interlocked with Regular Army defences. Because of these facts it may fairly be asked how the new principle of Local Mobility (replacing the earlier Static Defence) is to be applied.

No single answer can be given to this question. Everything depends on local circumstances. But this much may be safely said: every Home Guard commander needs to study and organise a system of swift and variable transport routes in his own district. Normally his men will not leave that area, but within it the more efficiently he can move men and weapons the greater will be his power of resistance and attack.

Here are some of the reasons, and most commanders will find one or other of them applicable to his own case.

A. The exact direction of the enemy's approach cannot be fore-known. He has a fondness for

pincers and outflanking movements. He may therefore seek to avoid the prepared defences, to pass by them on a flank at no cost to himself. The commander must take account of these possibilities in defining his object and making plans to achieve it. If the orders given him by higher authority, and the resources at his disposal, permit he may be able to leave an adequate garrison in the prepared defences while a striking force is assembled and transported to the nearest point whence it can attack the enemy on the move and at least harass and delay him.

B. It is not always possible for a Home Guard Commander to dispose a sufficient number of men to block every feasible route of enemy approach. Nevertheless, he will be well advised to form a small reserve at his battle headquarters, composed of active and well trained men, and supplied with as large a variety of weapons as possible. This reserve should be regarded as a striking force. Speedy transport should always be available, possibly a car may be armour-plated and mounted with a machine-gun (see page 58). The reserve can be thrown in with decisive effect to reinforce a hard-pressed defence or to enfilade the enemy from a flank or to strike at an air-borne landing. And where a unit has to guard three or more approaches and the enemy attack develops on one, it may be advisable, after despatching this motorised reserve, temporarily to deplete the garrisons in the

other approaches and so quickly form a second and temporary reserve. (See *Field Exercise* No. 9, page 132.)

C. For various reasons the prepared defences may become untenable for a time. If this occurs, the motorised reserve may—dependent on time and topographical factors—be able to cover the withdrawal of the garrisons on foot or by bicycle.

D. The enemy may halt outside the prepared defences and deploy his follow-up infantry to attack from the flanks. The motorised reserve can then be rushed by road to the most suitable point for meeting this attack. This will spare valuable time for any re-organisation of the defence garrisons which may be necessary.

Motor transport is obviously the most suitable instrument for achieving Local Mobility, but alternative preparations should be made in case the cars and lorries are damaged or run short of petrol, or the roads are blocked by bomb craters and debris. Every available bicycle should be mobilised. Motor transport for the Home Guard must move in small groups in order not to block roads needed for the movement of regular troops or to expose itself over much to air attack. And precautions must be taken to prevent any and every form of transport falling into the hands of the enemy.

If the enemy is pursued or hard pressed he must be attacked with full power where he is. If

he attempts to make airborne landings outside the prepared defences, every man and weapon which can be spared must be rushed to the scene of the landing. If he is moving by road or across country he must be intercepted. The aim of the Home Guard Commander should be to drive the enemy into open country and to keep him there, denying him the use of the roads while taking full advantage of them for the Home Guard. Thus Local Mobility should primarily be regarded as a means of getting men and weapons to the scene of probable action. In certain areas the formation of a Company Reserve as a motorised striking force is advisable and—where higher authority permits—one or two cars may be armour-plated from local resources. Concrete an inch thick, with revetment wire as reinforcement, between thin plates, gives good protection. All plating should slope inwards to deflect enemy fire. Apart from this, the aim of the Home Guard attacking the enemy on the move should be to get into firing positions, concealed and protected, across the line of his advance or on a flank. They should then let him come unsuspectingly well into range, and open fire on him with surprising and devastating effect.

Small Arms Weapons.—"Small arms" has become a slightly misleading expression: it would perhaps be nearer the mark to speak of "small calibre"—calibre being the internal diameter of the tube or barrel through which the missile is

projected. For Home Guard purposes, at least, the following can be classified as small arms weapons: the rifle: the automatic rifle or light machine gun: the medium and heavy machine gun: the sub-machine gun (tommy gun): the revolver; the shot gun firing a special charge.

They are all to be regarded as pre-eminently anti-personnel weapons; i.e., to be directed against men, not machines. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation, which must be taken strictly as exceptions. Machine guns, especially heavy machine guns, can and should be used against low-flying aircraft as a suitable occasion arises. The aeroplane in flight is a difficult target and ammunition should not be wasted. Dive-bombers should not be fired on unless and until they come very close in attacking a machine-gun post. Planes carrying parachutists fly very low and slow for some time. They should be attacked but with a maximum range of two hundred yards. Good fire-control is essential. No small arms weapon, however, should be used against a troop-carrying glider: even if the fabric or structure is riddled, a crash is not likely to result; once the glider has landed it ceases to be a mobile target and the troops it carries can be brought under concentrated fire. The same argument makes it a waste of time and ammunition to fire at parachutes; the target should be the parachutist just landed or landing. The only other occasion when a small arms weapon

can be profitably used other than against men is when a tank or other armoured vehicle is halted and—at close range—it is possible to aim accurately at the vents. Shots at members of a tank crew showing their heads through an opened turret count as anti-personnel fire.

Because this has become largely a war of machines there is in some quarters a tendency to undervalue small arms weapons, particularly the rifle. It is true to say that aircraft and tanks provide—so far as we can foresee—the most formidable elements in the Nazi invasion plan. It is true also that unless and until we can put those machines out of action the small arms weapons of the Home Guard are not likely to be of much use. But we have plans and techniques for dealing with those machines.—See *Tank Traps*, p. 46). And if we look at the problem from the other point of view, the Nazi point of view, we shall see that they do not by any means rely on machines alone.

Every Nazi tank section moving independently is likely to be protected by motor cyclists (i.e., mounted infantry) and follow-up infantry transported in lorries: their task will be to deploy, outflank and overcome any local resistance which may hold up the tanks or threaten them with disaster. In addition, the panzer columns, landed from the air or the sea, will be aided by air-born

troops, sent over by parachute and glider or troop-carrying plane. Once landed, these air-borne troops will act as infantry detachments—aided probably by light tanks and artillery. Again, the Nazis know perfectly well that panzer columns and infantry detachments dropped from the air will not suffice to conquer and hold down even a part of this country. They will try to land large forces of occupying troops.

All these offer targets to small arms fire, and targets which must not be missed if the invasion is to be defeated.

No Home Guardsman, therefore, need fear he is carrying round a weapon which he will not be able to use effectively. But he must use it with a thorough understanding of what it can and cannot do. He should make himself master of its mechanism and learn to handle it with the confident ease of familiarity. From time to time he should test himself in all the elements of its use, especially aiming and trigger pressure. He should use field exercises incidentally as a test of his weapon-training and as practice in keeping a cool and intelligent head on his shoulders, obeying orders strictly and promptly, finding the right thing to do when no orders are forthcoming. If his post is in a firing point, covering a road block, for example, he will remember that even in moments of high excitement he must not waste ammunition

on the armour-plating of tanks: his business is to look for heads showing through open turrets, crews emerging from damaged or burning tanks, infantry in their lorries or leaving the lorries or deployed off the road.

The automatic rifle is to be regarded primarily as a single shot weapon. Each shot can be aimed at an individual mark, but the automatic recocking and ejection of the spent cartridge means that an exceptionally high rate of rapid fire can be achieved. There will be few occasions for a prolonged burst of fire—but one of them is when lorry-borne infantry come into the sights. Normally, a series of short bursts, with the trigger pressed only for a second or two, is more effective in firing at groups of the enemy than the continuous expenditure of a whole magazine.

The automatic rifle as a weapon against low-flying aircraft (and they should be flying very low) is best used from a trench or ditch, or with the rifleman flat on his back. The Lewis gun and the heavy machine gun can hardly be used in this way against aircraft. Special mountings are necessary. The shaft should be extensible and a lock provided to clamp it in the extended position, yet giving free play. The ideal to aim at is a stand which will enable the gun to be swung to bring fire to bear in any direction, and at short or long ranges, on ground targets, while the extension converts the gun in a

second or two into an anti-aircraft weapon. Another idea worth consideration is to bore the splayed feet of the tripod to take a bolt. A number of lorries likely to be available in the event of action can then be prepared, and the tripod with the gun can then be mounted on whichever of the lorries first comes to hand when it is needed. A lorry so fitted can be used for the transport of reserves (Local Mobility), and the machine-gun team can use it as a platform, firing from behind road blocks or moving round by a circuitous route to take the lorry-borne enemy infantry from a flank.

Tommy-guns should be regarded as deadly weapons for close-range fighting. Because their range is so short they should be fired only in brief bursts, especially as in such fighting it will not always be easy to exchange magazines. The shot-gun, loaded with its special ammunition, can also have a terrific effect at short range—but cover should be obtained because of the time needed for reloading.

The bayonet for most Home Guard purposes is essentially a weapon for sentries and night patrols. Bayonet fighting should therefore be taught with this restricted aim in view. Home Guard formations in urban areas may usefully add practice in bayonet work for street fighting and house searching.

Gas Warfare.—Because the enemy has restrained himself from the use of gas for so long it is not

to be assumed that he will do so if and when he decides to attempt an invasion. Gas is not a decisive but an auxiliary weapon of war, and is most likely to be employed to cause confusion, panic and the immobility of forces which might otherwise move against the enemy. It may be sprayed from the air, either from a great altitude or from very low overhead. It may be sent in shells or in bombs from planes. Or it may be discharged in clouds to be carried by the wind, from containers established on shore or kept on vessels off the coast.

Gas may be used in one of several main classifications: it may affect the nose, the eyes, the skin, or the skin and throat; or it may combine several or all of these properties. Some gases are odourless and the first effect by which they can be recognised is a headache and emotional depression. Against all these varieties of gas—which, so far as research can foresee, cover all possibilities—the officially-issued respirators, eye-shades and ointments afford complete protection.

Gas is a tricky and two-edged weapon. German troops will not be anxious to pass through areas subjected to German gas. Moreover, the use of gas invites immediate reprisals, and the nation which decides on this step must (apart from any moral questions) be sure that its own home population is adequately protected and not likely to panic.

The situation can therefore be summed up thus: it is a possibility, but not a probability, that the Nazis will use gas against this country. The two strong deterrents are its limited and temporary effectiveness and the likelihood of reprisals having a disastrous effect on the German population at home.

If, however, gas is used as an adjunct to an attempted invasion, no one in this country who uses his equipment promptly and keeps calm is likely to suffer. Home Guard commanders, however, should remember that if gas is used against their units it will in all probability mean that the enemy hopes to cause confusion there and restrict activity. They should be prepared to put into effect the principle of Local Mobility and make use of alternative positions already prepared.

FIELD EXERCISES AND LEADERSHIP

NEXT to instruction and practice in the use of weapons, field exercises form the most important part of Home Guard training. This applies to town and city units as much as to those with stretches of open country to defend. The term "field exercise" should be taken to mean any mimic operation of war involving the use of a substantial proportion of a platoon, whether it is conducted over moors, meadows, woods and hill-sides, or in built-up areas.

The field exercise can be made to serve several valuable purposes. It should give Home Guardsmen practice in what are likely to be their duties if and when the Germans are able to make war by land in this country; it should enable them to test unpredictably, spontaneously and in circumstances continually changing, all the otherwise unco-ordinated details of soldiering they have been taught. Thus a series of field exercises offers opportunities for more or less realistic practice in the use of the various Home Guard weapons, in fire control, range finding, correct aim and trigger pressure (under conditions very different from the rifle range), as well as in camouflage, taking cover,

accurate observation and report, movement under fire, sniping and ambushes.

The limitations of the field exercise are obvious. It cannot reproduce the noise, the nerve strain, the casualties and the confusion of actual battle. But within these limits it should be made as realistic as possible. The Home Guard should, for most if not all field exercises, operate as a whole in the unit or sub-unit which is most likely to act more or less independently under invasion conditions. Thus in some districts the platoon will furnish the whole of the attack or defence; in others, the company. It should never be forgotten, however, that even where comparatively large numbers are available, the success of any operation largely depends on the section, which itself may at any time have to act independently. Section leaders should be chosen with great care, encouraged and consulted, and trained in all the qualities of leadership. In cities and large towns it may be possible to bring a whole battalion under single operational control. This means that a neighbouring platoon (or company or battalion) must be asked to co-operate, furnishing for the day attack against defence or vice versa. In many districts regular troops stationed near at hand will gladly join in a field exercise. And often Air Force units will supply the most realistic element of all, in the form of dive-bombing and low machine-gunning flights. For smaller scale field exercises, which

can be more easily and quickly arranged, one section can be set against three, or two against two. But practice for the operational unit acting as a whole, under single control, is the true end to be achieved.

The aim of the officer or officers preparing a field exercise should generally be to provide the two opposing commanders with such information and such specific orders that there is a reasonable probability of the two forces making early contact. Under the conditions of actual warfare such contacts are not always easy to achieve, but in field exercises it is worth while taking the trouble to make them probable: otherwise valuable hours are wasted and keen men are left with a feeling of frustration. The exercise should set definite topographical, time and operational limits with this purpose in view. But the two commanders should not receive more specific information about each other's intentions, forces and dispositions, than they are likely to get under actual conditions of war, and once zero hour arrives everything should be left to them to decide. Where prepared defences are to be attacked, there is rarely any trouble in ensuring contact, but where both forces are mobile, and the exact dispositions of each improvised and necessarily unknown to the other at the beginning of the exercise, the most satisfactory method in preparing the exercise is to ensure that one section of the attack traverses a limited area which is given

to one section of the defence to guard. If a penetration is effected, or the attackers are utterly surprised, the responsibility can afterwards be placed either on the commander for faulty dispositions or on the subordinate commander on the spot for tactical deficiencies.

This indicates another essential for a satisfactory field exercise—a sufficient number of umpires. In general terms it can be laid down that there should be one umpire present with each sub-unit—the section, if the platoon is the operational unit, the platoon if the company acts as a whole. If there are fewer umpires than this, disputes are inevitable: each side believes that it opened fire first and inflicted heavy casualties at no cost to itself. At best, the men feel that their good work has been wasted because no independent judge was present to observe. Umpires should wear a prominent mark (such as a white handkerchief on the sleeve or shoulder strap) to distinguish them from the combatants. It is an advantage, though not an essential, if they can be drawn from outside the membership of the units taking part. Higher commanders and officers on the staff at H.Q., (weapons-training, intelligence, pioneer officers, etc.) are valuable as umpires not only because of their prestige but because they bring specialist knowledge with them. And occasionally an exchange of umpires between adjacent platoons, companies or battalions is helpful: it promotes

liaison, and the experience of seeing another unit at work often suggests new ideas and discovers unsuspected deficiencies in the training of one's own.

A well planned and efficiently carried out exercise affords instruction and enjoyment to everyone concerned, but care must be taken that, owing to exuberance and the absence of live ammunition, the operation does not degenerate into a display of high spirits. Some commanders like to let their men finish up with a wild charge at the enemy "because they enjoy it." In my view this is a most dangerous practice and should always be avoided. Such charging, in the Royal Academy picture manner, usually results in heavy casualties, and what men practise in mimic warfare they are apt to carry out when they meet a real enemy—that is indeed the whole aim of weapon-training and field exercises. Close-quarter fighting should never occur (except by night or in the undergrowth of woods) unless a genuine surprise is effected—and then a post-mortem is called for to discover why and how one side was surprised.

The natural keenness of men and commanders can be relied on to overcome a good deal of the non-realist atmosphere of field exercises, but care should be taken that this keenness does not lead to men moving about incautiously, rushing past gaps in hedges bunched together, showing themselves on the skyline to gain the advantage of speed,

merely because they know that on this occasion they are not going to be penalised by bullets. Umpires should be ever present and ever vigilant to avert casualties against indiscretions. It also helps to achieve the air of realism if umpires (by previous arrangement and at a certain stage in the operations) intervene to produce a drastic and sudden change in the situation beyond what might normally be expected from the opposing force. Thus at a certain point an umpire might go to the local commander and say to him: "The enemy has brought up a gun and is pumping gas shells (or smoke bombs) into your defences. What are you going to do about it?" Alternatively he might say: "Three Spitfires have come down low and are machine-gunning the enemy attacking you. Now get on with it." Or again: "You have been dive-bombed. You yourself are out of action and twenty of your men. Your strong point is untenable." After that, the umpire would observe who carries on and how.

Some Home Guard units are responsible for the defence of areas comparatively large in relation to the forces at their disposal. This should be regarded not as a handicap but as an advantage. Even those units which are charged with the duty of holding prepared defences at all costs should remember that circumstances (especially perhaps dive-bombing, gas, and smoke screens) or a change of general orders as the major military situation

alters may force them to leave these prepared defences at any rate for a time. It is the duty of the commander to prepare his men by field exercises for such eventualities. The role of the Home Guard has been defined as Static Warfare—an unfortunate phrase—but this should not be taken with too strict a literalness. There are alternative ways of defending towns and villages besides waiting behind inner defences for the enemy to attack.

In general, Static Defence means that each Home Guard unit will operate only on its own territory, but on that territory it should cultivate Local Mobility to the utmost degree of speed, flexibility and striking power. This means that every point to be defended should be covered by a number of alternative positions, well concealed, and if possible connected by covered approaches. It also means that men should be conveyed by road to the nearest feasible point whence they can attack the enemy, thus saving time and fatigue.

Field exercises offer an invaluable opportunity for the practice of Local Mobility, and, so far as petrol supplies allow, motor transport should be used in the exercises themselves. Bicycles make the next best substitute. The blocking of roads by bomb craters and debris, however, should be allowed for, and care should be taken that motor transport is not incautiously parked where its presence may give away even the most carefully concealed position.

The fighting function of the Home Guard must not be allowed to obscure or hinder its duty to observe and report (by the authorised means) all enemy movements. This is an essential part of every well-planned exercise, and on no account is it to be omitted. Every member of the unit should be practised in the duties of the scout and runner, and headquarters staff should take it in turn to receive and transmit messages. From time to time umpires should announce that telephone communications have broken down, and not merely platoon commanders and section leaders but the men entrusted with messages should be left to meet the situation out of their own resources.

Finally, one of the most valuable aspects of the field exercise is that it affords commanders and seconds-in-command experience in the operational control of their units (ranging in size down to the section or even a squad of seven or eight men) in making dispositions and plans on the ground they can expect to fight over, and to some extent in testing by trial and error the active service efficiency of themselves and the men under their control. It would be too much to ask that every commander in the Home Guard should possess the experience and ability of a first-class general. Yet an outline knowledge of the broad principles of successful modern land warfare is essential. Such an outline knowledge must remain academic unless and until it is fully absorbed and understood. These

principles need not be studied in detail, but they should—indeed they must—become the basis of all the commander's thinking and decisions.

After the penetrative power and speed of movement of the armoured division with air support—and arising out of it—the development which most strikingly distinguishes the warfare of to-day from that of 1914–18 is the impossibility of the higher command retaining close control over the activities of its units once action has started. With certain reservations, it was true to say that in 1914–18 a divisional commander could operate three or four brigades of infantry together with supporting artillery, engineers, supply and medical services. That rarely holds good to-day. The division has reduced its numbers (but increased its fire-power and its mobility) and must often work in smaller, separated, independent parts. Every subaltern, indeed every sergeant of infantry, is now trained to take up the responsibilities of independent command on occasion and for indefinite periods.

What is true of the rest of the Army is even more applicable to the Home Guard. The size of the operational unit varies with the density of population and the permanent or temporary presence of regular troops, but in general it can be said that every platoon commander and section-leader (and his second-in-command) must be prepared to act as an independent commander, making his own

appreciations and decisions on the spot. In brief, he must be ready to fulfil the role of a general, if only for a limited time. To do this efficiently he needs to cultivate clear thinking and obtain a grasp of certain basic principles which will direct all his military preparations and actions.

These principles can be stated quite simply. The problem is to apply them in times of stress, when exact and true knowledge is hard to come by, and difficult to distinguish from rumour, exaggeration and false or irrelevant reports. The more frequent, and the more realistic practice the commander can obtain before he finds himself confronted with the real and befogged problems of modern war, the better for him, for the Home Guard, and the country.

As a basis for every operational plan, the commander should cultivate, until it becomes a habit and instinct, the device of imagining himself into the position of the enemy. The first question must always be: "What would I do if I were the Nazi commander with a Nazi background and outlook, and Nazi forces at my disposal?" And here the Nazi principle of speed reinforced by terror, possibly careless of casualties to its own side, must be borne in mind. The enemy's probable purpose once established, the Home Guard plan must be designed to defeat it.

These, then, are the principles on which it can safely be said that good leadership is based.

1. *The commander must know, and never forget, his main object.*

Note first that the military "object" means purpose or aim. It should not be confused with "objective" which signifies a place or line of country to be reached.

The object of Home Guard operations may vary considerably. It may be to prevent the enemy reaching one or more places in the unit area; it may be to observe and report the enemy's movements and keep contact with him: it may be to keep the enemy out of a town or village by manning strong points: or to observe, report and oppose the landing of air-borne troops: or to cut off a cross-country movement: to deny the enemy the use of a railway: or to fight his tanks and follow-up infantry (at a place selected beforehand by the Home Guard): or to facilitate the passage of our own troops: or to defend a factory or airfield: or it may be some combination of these.

To a certain extent the probable nature of these objects can be foreseen now, but surprises by the enemy should be allowed for. Until he receives information from his own scouts or from other reliable sources the commander acting independently cannot finally determine what his object will be. His standing orders and defence plans will define for him his object in general terms, from which he must never depart. Once he

receives information of an enemy approach he should be able to define his object in greater detail, first to himself, then his subordinate commanders. He, and they, then know the object (or main purpose) in view. Everything that follows is a means of attaining that end.

2. *The commander must make his plan for attaining his object conform to the forces and weapons at his disposal.*

The Home Guard cannot afford to miss any genuine opportunity of opposing, hindering and inflicting casualties on the enemy. Speed of action is all important. Orders must be given quickly and clearly. But keenness is no excuse for initiating an operation unless there is a reasonable prospect of carrying it to a successful conclusion. (If orders are received from a higher authority, that is another matter; they must be obeyed immediately and fully. Here we are concerned only with the commander who has to exercise an independent command.)

As soon as he has imagined himself in the place of the enemy, and calculated the enemy's purpose, the commander can make his own plan. He will then quickly consider whether he has sufficient men, sufficient time, and sufficient fire power to give him a reasonable chance of bringing it to a successful conclusion. If not, he must reject that plan and

find another one more feasible. He should not order an offensive operation, for example, if he cannot get enough men in contact with the enemy in time. He should not attack tanks with machine guns, rifles and grenades unless he can first halt them or slow them down and dislodge the tank crews. But Local Mobility is to be reckoned among his resources. So long as he can break off action and renew it from another place and in a different way, he may be justified in attacking swiftly even though he is not fully informed of the enemy strength.

3. *The commander must try to surprise the enemy, to do what the enemy does not expect.*

In order to achieve surprise—a most valuable element in any operation—the commander must exercise his imagination with energy and good sense. He must put himself in the place of the enemy arriving in the locality by air, land or sea, with no more knowledge of the district than is to be gained from maps and perhaps photographs. He should try to realise the purposes which the enemy is likely to carry out and the difficulties confronting him. He must try hard for a few moments to think as a Nazi would think. Then, returning to his own point of view, he should seek to thwart the enemy purpose in ways the enemy will least expect and least relish. In particular, he should be ready to exploit such difficulties as the enemy

is not likely to discover until he has rubbed his nose up against them.

There may be sound reasons why the commander should choose obvious lines and methods of attack and defence. But where alternative courses of approximately equal promise are open, it is wise to choose the one which—from the enemy's point of view—is less likely to be foreseen and forestalled. If, for example, a potential landing-ground can be brought under fire from a bridge, from a ditch or from a spinney, it might be well to choose the ditch, remembering that it is not so prominent on the map nor so visible from ground level. At the same time, the other two firing points might be used by smaller parties to distract the enemy's attention while the main attack develops. If nearby villages have their defences placed close within the village, it might pay the commander to give battle outside his own village. Or he might furnish two or three dummy defences or traps in succession, and use the next position along the enemy's line of advance to surprise him just as he grows over-confident. Or a sub-unit might be ordered to retreat before the enemy, leading him into a trap.

Local Mobility offers many opportunities for effecting surprise, and the same principle should be applied to the siting and erection of prepared defences. Those which are to be used in earnest

should be placed where the enemy can discover them (if at all) only at the last possible moment when he is already under fire. They should be skilfully camouflaged. The others, serving as dummies to draw fire, should not be left unconcealed in their pristine nakedness, but camouflaged with deliberate lack of skill, so that the enemy is deceived into thinking he has discovered a point of weakness.

4. *The commander should hold back his reserve as a striking force until the moment arrives when he can use them decisively.*

In the kind of decentralised warfare which will leave Home Guard commanders with an independent command there are not likely to be many opportunities for probing soft spots in the enemy's defences and exploiting lines of least resistance. But the old maxim of withholding reserves until the main attack (whether conducted by the enemy or the Home Guard) develops, although in general it demands larger forces than a Home Guard commander is likely to possess, has a certain limited application here. Reserves should be highly mobile and given strong fire-power. Thrown in at the right moment, they may be able to prevent a breach of the defences, and to turn defence into counter-attack. They are likely to be most valuable if they come into action at a point away from the rest of the defenders, and open fire from a flank.

Immediately they have done their job the reserves should be reformed and recalled to headquarters. Essentially the small body of reserves at the disposal of a Home Guard commander should be used (a) for reinforcement; (b) to stop infiltrations; (c) to bring extra fire power to bear on the enemy when he shows signs of disorganisation and demoralisation.

5. *The commander should make sure his plans for defence or attack are not too rigid. They should allow his subordinate commanders a certain freedom of action and offer them alternative routes for advance and withdrawal.*

In real warfare plans can only rarely be carried out to the letter. Too much is uncertain, and the situation is always changing. The commander should keep his object (main purpose) clearly in mind, and remember that there are various ways of attaining it. His plan should therefore, within limits, be variable. If it becomes unwise to use one road, he must switch to another. If he cannot cut off the enemy's line of advance at one point, because time has been lost, he must quickly find another place for his interception. Above all, he must avoid planning an operation which may succeed entirely, but, if anything goes wrong, utterly fails. In war something always goes wrong. The eggs must not be put all in one basket. The good commander lives—as a commander—from

hour to hour, holding inflexibly to his object (main purpose), but always ready to use one of several means of attaining it. Whatever does not further his object is useless and should be rejected. The commander cannot be everywhere at once: he should therefore be sure that his subordinate commanders understand his object, and, subject to that, they should in attack or defence have alternative courses open to them, of which they must choose the one most likely to yield success.

6. *The commander should not renew an attack in the same place or by the same method once it has failed.*

This principle embodies one of the bitterest and most costly lessons of the 1914-18 war. Even if the enemy defence has been shaken (knowledge not always available to the attackers), an identical repetition of an attack only makes things easier for him. If the attack is renewed in the same place, another method, or other weapons, must be used. Very often the best resource is to rely on Local Mobility, to withdraw quickly and come in again from another quarter. But, generally speaking, once an engagement has begun the commander can rarely influence it except by the employment of his reserves.

Field Exercises planned and conducted on these lines ought to yield valuable experience. Some

can profitably be undertaken first by day and later by night. Their general effect is similar to that of drill in the handling of weapons. By repeated practice commanders and men learn to apply principles in action—a much more difficult task than the definitions and analyses here undertaken—and doing the right thing at the right time becomes more or less instinctive. A man in battle undergoes certain violent impressions on his nerves and his senses. These impressions are apt to distract him from his duty and confuse his thinking unless he not only knows, but can unhesitatingly carry out, the basic actions required of him. He needs to be thoroughly rehearsed before the first performance. It is the purpose of field exercises to supply the necessary rehearsals.

CHAPTER V

TEN SPECIMEN FIELD EXERCISES

*Field Exercises No. 1.*CLEARING A SMALL WOOD OF
ENEMY ON FOOT

(See Diagram 4)

ON no account should the wood be entered from all sides; otherwise men are almost certain to fire on their own comrades, and amid the confusion and recriminations some of the enemy may escape. The most satisfactory method is to make a drive through the wood with a line of moppers-up. A V formation, covering the whole spread of the wood, is sometimes prescribed, but experiment has shown it to be impracticable, for the Home Guard at least. Alignment is difficult to maintain, and where there is thick undergrowth even the general direction may be lost. A single line for a straight drive through seems a better proposition. The commander should take post with a small mobile reserve and, on either side of him (but also behind

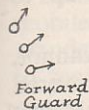
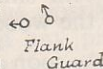
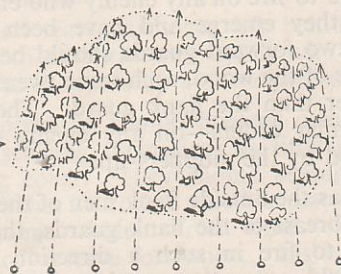
Forward
Guard

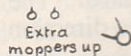
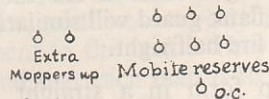
Diagram 4
*Clearing a small wood of
Enemy on foot.*

Forward
GuardFlank
GuardFlank
Guard

Line of Moppers-up



Rear Guard



Rear Guard



the main line), small parties of moppers-up to carry out a final search.

While the wood should not, and usually cannot, be surrounded, each side of it should be covered by fire. To prevent escapes to right or left two flank guards should be posted, one on each side with orders to fire on any enemy who emerge—but not until they emerge and have been identified. Similarly two forward guards should be posted on the far side of the wood, each some twenty or thirty yards wider than the flank guard. They will fire—with similar orders—on any enemy driven out of the wood by the moppers-up.

As soon as the outside flank men of the moppers-up come abreast of the flank guards, these guards will cease to fire in such a direction that their bullets would enter the wood and endanger the moppers-up—unless at point-blank range. When this point is reached the left flank guard will change direction half left, i.e. across the further end of the wood, but taking care to avoid the forward guard. The right flank guard will similarly change the direction of its fire half right.

The moppers-up form in a straight line and preserve this alignment during their advance through the wood in order that any enemy groups encountered may be put out of action or driven out to where the flank and forward guards can fire on them.

Behind this line of moppers-up proceed the mobile reserves—with whom the operational commander might well place himself. Their task is to move swiftly towards any centre of determined resistance and put an end to it. On either side of the reserves should be placed small parties of extra moppers-up.

Two small rear-guards are left behind, one on each flank, to deal with any enemy who escape the sweep of the moppers-up and mobile reserves.

The moppers-up should proceed cautiously and quietly, disclosing themselves as little as possible and taking cover. They should search any pits, thickets, ditches and other suitable places in which the enemy may hide. From time to time they will halt to preserve formation. Inside the wood the enemy has a distinct advantage. He will have chosen firing positions in cover, and may well be able to inflict casualties before he is forced to retreat or surrender. To minimise these casualties the moppers-up should show themselves as little as possible, and move swiftly from one point of concealment to the next. They should be warned beforehand that each man is to halt, as he reaches the further margin of the wood, so as not to cross the field of fire of the flank and forward guards.

The most suitable arms for this operation are rifles with fixed bayonets and tommy guns (sub-machine guns). The mobile reserve should carry

in addition light machine guns and hand grenades. The grenades should be used only under the commanders' orders, to dig out the enemy from a pit or watercourse: and it should be borne in mind that fragments of grenade casing may carry as far as a hundred yards.

The task of clearing a wood should not be undertaken except in daylight or very strong moonlight. During hours of darkness, posts should be established round the wood, roughly in the positions indicated for forward, flank and rear-guards, with order to fire only at short range and at identified enemies. The clearing operation should commence as soon as the light is suitable.

Field Exercise No. 2

DEFENCE OF A VULNERABLE POINT BY OUTPOSTS

(See Diagram 5)

FOR this exercise platoon may be opposed to platoon, or two sections against another two. If the scale of the forces used is increased the operation becomes more complex, and it may be as well to mount the attack from two widely separated points of the compass, even N.—S. or E.—W.

In this example the defence commander's dispositions are governed by the situation of the vulnerable point to be protected, the local topography, and the expected direction and strength of the enemy advance.

The enemy is assumed to be a body of parachutists proceeding on foot to sabotage, and perhaps to keep a rendezvous or seize transport on Laburnum Road where the vulnerable point is sited. The defence commander—his right flank and rear secured by other Home Guard forces—realises that he has not enough men to push

forward into the wood with any reasonable hope of engaging the enemy decisively there. As the ground slopes down from the wood towards the west and is open there, he depends on his two road blocks to hold up any attempt by the enemy to proceed down these roads. (If only two sections are opposed to two, these road blocks can be assumed to be held by the rest of the platoon).

Given these data, the defence commander may dispose of his men in many ways, and the one indicated on the diagram is put forward only as a basis for discussion. In any event, variations must be made to fit local topography. But the principles on which the diagram dispositions have been made are worth considering.

Three outposts are put out as near to the direction of the enemy's advance as is safe. Outpost A is highly mobile, with cycles or preferably cars at hand. It conceals itself behind the hedge and roadsides at the bend in Raspberry Lane, and from this position can open fire on the enemy as he advances down Raspberry Lane or Blitz Road, or across the open low country to the north and west; this should give early warning of his approach to the other outposts, H.Q. and reserves, and the garrisons of the road blocks. Under pressure Outpost A will retire by road and either join the garrison at Road Block Y or leave its transport there and proceed on foot to reinforce

the garrison of Road Block X, if a strong attack develops down Blitz Road.

Outpost B is furthest forward at the opening of the exercise. It is on foot, and takes station (immediately signalling its position to Outpost A) inside the wood, on the western edge. Here it conceals itself and is ready to fire on the enemy moving through the wood, down Raspberry Lane, or across open country to the west. The line on which Outpost B will retire is to the transverse ditch and hedge, where it can hope to make a stand, and then down the N.—S. ditch and hedge, breaking away to hold the weapon pit behind the vulnerable point, as indicated in the diagram.

Outpost C, also on foot, takes up its position just inside the wood near the eastern edge of the territory allotted to the enemy advance. Under pressure, or in conformity with the movements of other outposts, it will retire due south, by hedge and ditch, and make its first stand somewhere in rear (as well as to the right flank) of the first standing point for Outpost B. This is in order to safeguard itself from an outflanking movement by the enemy on its right, made under cover of the wood. Finally, Outpost C holds the other weapon pit in rear of the vulnerable point.

The defence commander establishes his H.Q. behind the vulnerable point, with his mobile reserves on the road, and a few others, not mobile,

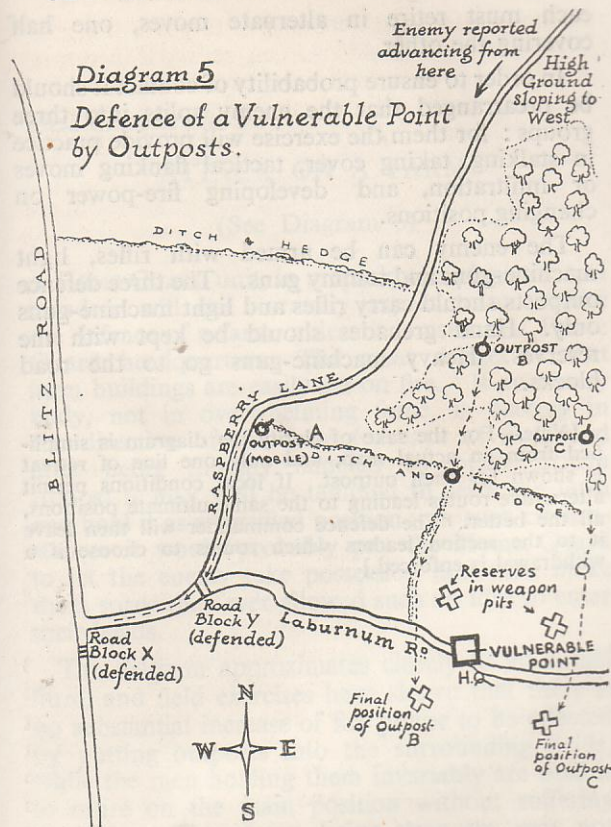
in the two forward weapon pits to cover the point. Thus Outposts B and C can retire, if necessary, wide of and covered by the two forward weapon pits, and their withdrawal during its later stages can be covered by fire from the reserves in these weapon pits.

Such dispositions ensure that the defence makes the earliest safe contact with the enemy that is possible and guard against any sweeping movement to outflank on the east by road or over open country; while if the outposts are forced back they have prearranged lines of retreat which bring two of them back concentrically on the rear weapon pits, while the third can enfilade the enemy (from Road Block Y) if he should attempt a close assault. The reserves should be withheld for meeting this assault and should only be thrown into the attack if the outposts succeed in disorganising the enemy at first or second contact. Even so, the defence commander should put in only a minority of his reserves, for fear the enemy's withdrawal is a feint.

The outposts, until they reach the weapon pits in rear, must not allow the enemy to engage them at close quarters. Their aim should be to inflict casualties by surprise and by opening fire at a useful range (200—400 yards). They must retire in due order, each outpost providing covering fire for the other, if the ground permits; otherwise

Diagram 5

Defence of a Vulnerable Point by Outposts.



each must retire in alternate moves, one half covering the other.

In order to ensure probability of contact it should be prearranged that the enemy splits into three groups : for them the exercise will provide practice in stalking, taking cover, tactical flanking moves or infiltration, and developing fire-power on changing positions.

The enemy can be armed with rifles, light machine-guns and tommy guns. The three defence outposts should carry rifles and light machine-guns only. Hand grenades should be kept with the reserves. Heavy machine-guns go to the road blocks.

[*Note.*—For the sake of clarity the diagram is simplified from an actual map, and only one line of retreat is shown for each outpost. If local conditions permit alternative routes leading to the same ultimate positions, all the better. The defence commander will then leave it to the section leaders which routes to choose if a withdrawal is enforced.]

Field Exercise No. 3.

ATTACK ON A FARM

(See Diagram 6)

A HOME GUARD unit, in preparing its plans to repel invaders, will not normally expect to undertake the defence of a farm, unless it is used as a Home Guard headquarters. The great danger is that farm buildings are easily set on fire. If an enemy body, not in overwhelming force, is making in the direction of the farm (perhaps at dusk and after being roughly handled by other British troops) it may well be tempted to seize the farm and hold it as a fortified position ; in such circumstances it would probably pay the Home Guard to let the enemy take possession and then make them sorry they ever allowed such an idea to enter their heads.

The diagram approximates closely to an actual farm, and field exercises have shown that there is no substantial increase of fire power to be effected by putting outposts into the surrounding fields, while the men holding them invariably are unable to retire on the main position without suffering casualties. The enemy, being strangers, may not

realise this, and the first stage of any attack therefore should be to reconnoitre and then to overpower or cut off any outposts he may have established.

At zero hour the commander of the attacking force should be informed of where the enemy was last seen, and when and in what direction he was moving. He should also be given an estimate (which may later prove erroneous) of the enemy's arms and equipment. His first task is to discover if the enemy is in occupation and to deal with any outposts.

The wall round the farmyard is a hindrance to the defence; it may enable the attackers to come in close under its protection. The north-south stretch of the wall can be covered from the main building (Post A) but to bring fire to bear on anyone approaching the east-west stretch, the enemy (defence) commander must establish a post at the northern end of the stables and sheds. If he puts it at the north-east corner (Post F) it can also fire down Haywagon Lane. Post E, at the south-east corner of the stables, commands the main gate and to some extent Turnpike Road. Posts E and F should therefore be regarded as constituting an independent garrison under a subordinate commander. It is not likely they will be able to rejoin the main body of the defence if the attack gets to close quarters, and if any satisfactory strong point in the farmyard can be impro-

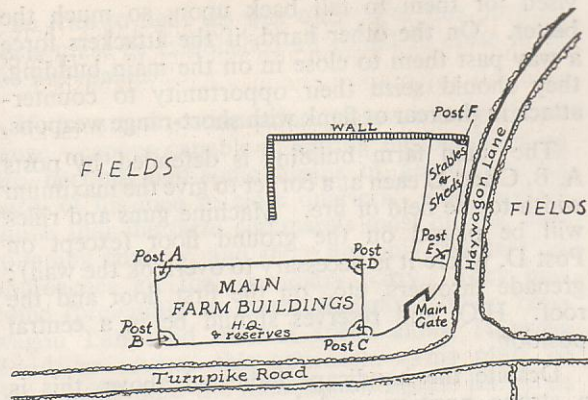


Diagram 6

Attack on a Farm



vised for them to fall back upon, so much the better. On the other hand, if the attackers force a way past them to close in on the main building, they should seize their opportunity to counter-attack in the rear or flank with short-range weapons.

The main farm building is defended by posts A, B, C and D each at a corner to give the maximum width to the field of fire. Machine guns and rifles will be placed on the ground floor (except on Post D, where it is necessary to overlook the wall); grenade throwers, etc., on the first floor and the roof. H.Q. and reserves should be in a central position.

Despite the handicaps indicated above, this is a strong position, and heavy casualties may be inflicted by the defence, with its command of the country around, at ranges from eight hundred to two hundred yards. The greatest danger to the defending army is from the incendiary weapons.

The commander of the attacking force should therefore aim at setting the main building and stables on fire. A "token" conflagration will do perfectly well for the purposes of a field exercise. If he has long-range weapons at his disposal capable of doing this, his task is simplified. The fire will drive the enemy out. (The umpires with the enemy must decide when the building is no longer habitable.) The attackers can then take prisoners as they emerge or shoot down the enemy

if he tries to fight his way out. For this purpose posts must be established all round to close in as the fire spreads.

If the attack commander possesses only short-range weapons capable of setting the buildings on fire, he must find some means of getting a small party of his men to close quarters. The diagram shows that the farm commands most of the surrounding country, and there are only two feasible approaches for the incendiary party. They may come (preferably in motor transport) down Haywagon Lane and turn at speed along Turnpike Road, or reverse this approach. This must be done swiftly and the inflammable agents hurled as they go past: a hazardous and uncertain operation.

The other alternative is for the incendiary party to creep and crawl down the hedged ditch from the south or under cover of the roadside hedges. When they get to close quarters they should be covered for their final dash by fire from as many machine guns as can be brought up, either mobile on the road or firing from the spinney. To time and direct such machine-gun fire, however, is not easy. Practice and co-ordination by signal system is needed.

This exercise should be tried first in daylight, and if the attack proves too difficult, it should be tried again by night, and a note made that in real

warfare any enemy in possession should be contained there until nightfall.

Unless the local strength is exceptionally high, not more than two sections should be allotted to the defence. The attacking strength should be at least equal, except by night. Both defence and attack should be equipped with heavy and light machine-guns, tommy guns, rifles and bayonets, hand grenades and incendiary weapons.

The exercise can profitably be repeated several times, attack and defence interchanging, and the attack varying its route and methods, until every reasonable probability has been well tested.

Field Exercise No. 4

HOLDING A FORTIFIED STREET AGAINST ENEMY WITH TRANSPORT

(See Diagram 7)

THIS exercise is especially suitable for urban areas, but may easily be adapted for a village. If possible, a street lined continuously with houses, neither detached nor semi-detached, should be chosen as the site for action. It is virtually impossible to pin an enemy and effect a victory in a street where gaps between houses afford ways of escape, unless the defence possesses sufficient materials, men and weapons to fortify and cover all these gaps.

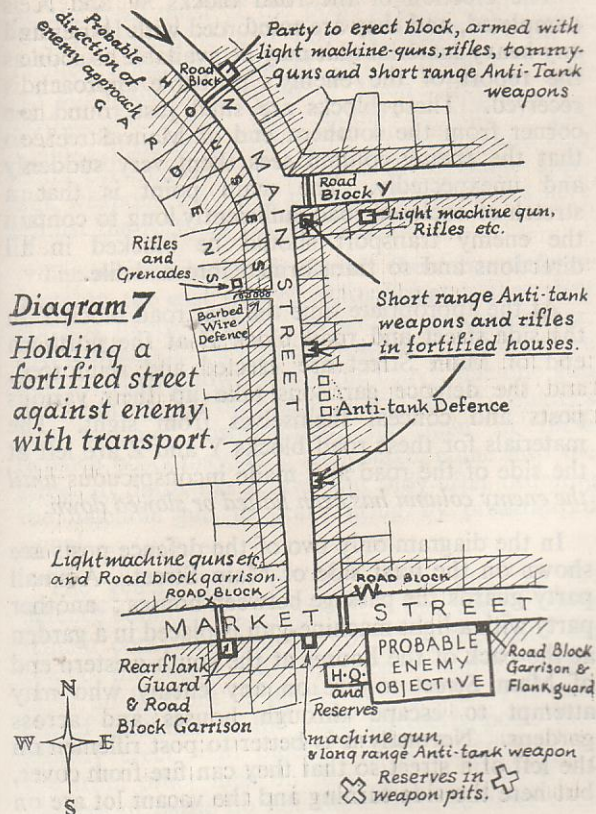
In the diagram it will be seen that Main Street (where the defence commander intends to bring the enemy to action) includes a side turning to the east at the northern end, a vacant building lot on the eastern side, and a passage on the western side. These must be adequately stopped, with a road block, anti-tank obstacles and barbed wire respectively, and garrisoned.

The enemy is reported to be approaching from the north in vehicles, probably three tanks, with motor-cyclists in front, and lorry-borne infantry

behind or in front of the last tank. The defence commander has already noted the large building on the south side of Market Street as a probable objective which the enemy may try to seize and hold as part of the process of infiltrating into the town or village and capturing it piecemeal. (See *Street Fighting*, p. 51.) Having prepared defences and fortified houses beforehand, and reckoning the forces and weapons at his disposal adequate to the task of giving battle to this comparatively small enemy body, he resolves to fight before the enemy reaches his probable objective at all.

The means he adopts is a variation of the tank trap in a defile; he has to reckon also with the motor-cyclist outriders and the accompanying infantry in lorries.

In choosing a Headquarters for the action and posts of his reserves he may elect to place them nearer the junction of Main Street with Market Street. The position shown in the diagram gives him a less than perfect view, but on the other hand it provides a line of communication via houses and gardens on the east side of Main Street, which should be relatively free from fire: along this line he can send and receive messages and despatch reinforcements from his reserves. He guards his rear with two weapon pits and a rear flank guard is posted in a house on the south side of Market Street, also covering road block X.



The erection of the road blocks W and X is completed, and they are reinforced with lorries and any heavy material that may be available as soon as the report of the enemy's probable approach is received. These blocks are sited just round the corner from the southern end of Main Street, so that the enemy column sees them very suddenly and unexpectedly. The main point is that a stretch of enclosed road sufficiently long to contain the enemy transport should be blocked in all directions and so transformed into a defile.

At the appropriate time the rear road block Y in the side street and road block Z at the northern end of Main Street are erected and reinforced, and the defence garrisons take up their various posts and conceal themselves from sight. The materials for these road blocks Y and Z are left at the side of the road and made inconspicuous *until the enemy column has been halted or slowed down.*

In the diagram only two of the defence posts are shown on the west side of Main Street. A small party guards the passage between houses; another party with a light machine-gun is placed in a garden at the back of the houses at the south-western end of Main Street to fire on any enemy who may attempt to escape through houses and across gardens. Normally it is better to post riflemen on the left of a street so that they can fire from cover, but here the side turning and the vacant lot are on

the right, so most of the posts are grouped there. A heavy machine gun post is established in a fortified house on Market Street, from which it can command the length of Main Street to just beyond the bend. This should be able to put infantry dislodged from tanks or lorries, and also motor-cyclists, out of action. Close range anti-tank weapons may also be used from houses here against the forward enemy vehicles.

The advantage of placing all the other defence posts on the east side of Main Street is that they are less likely to inflict casualties on each other. The men should be warned, however, not to venture into the street, down which the heavy machine gun will be firing. If the enemy suffers severe casualties and becomes disorganised, the men in these defence posts may, at a later stage, come into the street to finish the action, but only after ordering the machine gun to cease firing by prearranged signal.

The general plan of the action, then, as the defence commander designs it, is that the garrisons remain concealed and do not open fire until the head of the enemy column, probably motor-cyclists, pulls up in front of blocks W and X. The concealed garrisons of the most northerly posts then quickly erect road blocks Y and Z, covered by fire from other men on these posts. Even if the chances of battle do not allow them to erect these

rear blocks, they should be able to prevent the enemy withdrawing. The enemy is thus halted and, unable to turn and escape, must give battle.

The aim of the defence should be to fall on him instantaneously from a number of positions, using machine-guns, light or heavy, tommy guns, rifles, flame throwers and other anti-tank weapons. Generally speaking, anti-tank and other grenades, Molotoffs and such will be thrown from upper windows at tanks and lorries, and S.A. will be fired from ground floor windows. If anti-tank mines or explosives are used, the detonating party must be given clear space to work in.

A company is the most suitable unit to carry out this defence, or three platoons with the other platoon taking the part of the mechanised enemy, whose arms may be augmented for this occasion.

The umpires may judge that a certain number of the enemy would escape this first simultaneous assault and take up positions in the houses on the west side of Main Street. The exercise may then enter on a second stage of house-to-house fighting. This will be useful practice, but the results are difficult to judge. If possible, one umpire should be stationed at each road block and street defence post, and at least three should be with the enemy, to estimate the effect of the attack.

Field Exercise No. 5.

DEFENCE OF A BRIDGE OVER A RIVER OR CANAL

(See Diagram 8)

THE strength of the garrison will depend on the importance of the road and the bridge carrying it across water. The road-blocks at each end will be of concrete or some other permanent material. Better results will be obtained if strong points are *not* embodied in them or sited just beside or in rear of them. This is because the garrison will probably find its view along the road obstructed, and the obviousness of the defence position may lead to the enemy concentrating high-explosives on it with disastrous effect.

In the diagram only one approach, with the appropriate defence system, is indicated, but it should not be assumed that because the enemy approaches from the north he will not also appear from the south. Even if he has crossed the river at another point, it will still be of the utmost value to deny him the use of the bridge—and relief may come speedily.

For this exercise the defence commander should not be informed of the enemy's strength or location, but left to obtain information from his outposts, which should be in visual communication with the bridge defence H.Q. and have a pre-arranged and simple system of signals.

Informed in this way of the enemy approach, the commander will man his posts, send off a message to the appropriate quarter that he expects an attack, and complete his road-blocks.

We assume that the enemy attack comes from the north. It will be met with S.A. fire from the weapon pits (each with an alternative position connected by a crawl trench) A, B, C and D. These are designed to cover the full arc of 180 degrees in which the enemy can approach the bridge and its block. He can be fired at both on the road and on the flanks if he attempts to develop an attack there.

Four bombing pits, E, F, G, and H are dug close to the roadside, and from these enemy vehicles halted or slowing up can be attacked with close-range anti-tank weapons. In addition to this, from the point X near the river bank and on a flank, long-range anti-tank weapons can be used on the enemy vehicles, and a machine-gun or other anti-personnel weapon used against the dislodged tank crews or follow-up infantry. The siting of the barbed-wire entanglement presents a problem. It

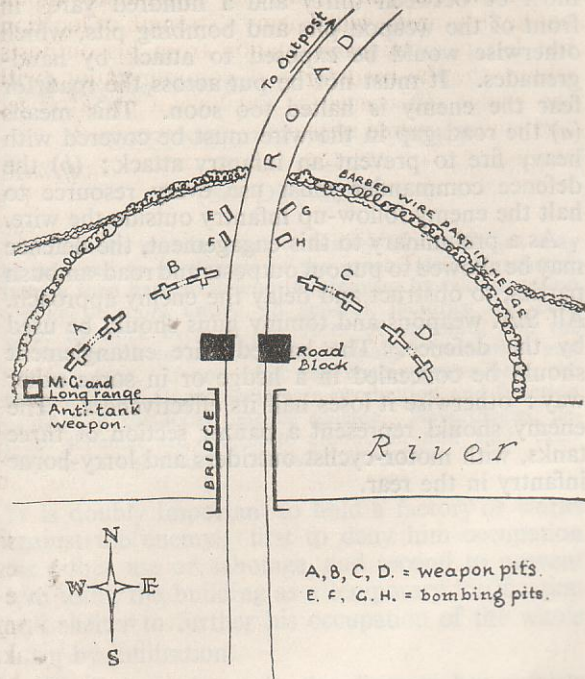


Diagram 8
*Defence of a Bridge
over River or Canal*

must be between thirty and a hundred yards in front of the weapon pits and bombing pits, which otherwise would be exposed to attack by hand-grenades. It must not be put across the road for fear the enemy is halted too soon. This means (a) the road gap in the wire must be covered with heavy fire to prevent an infantry attack; (b) the defence commander must use every resource to halt the enemy follow-up infantry outside the wire.

As a preliminary to this engagement, the defence may be allowed to put out outposts and road-ambush parties, to obstruct and delay the enemy approach. All S.A. weapons and Tommy guns should be used by the defence. The barbed wire entanglement should be concealed in a hedge or in some other way: otherwise it loses half its effectiveness. The enemy should represent a panzer section of three tanks, with motor-cyclist outriders and lorry-borne infantry in the rear.

Field Exercise No. 6

DEFENCE OF A FACTORY

(See Diagram 9)

[*Note*.—In certain areas a factory Home Guard may be required to participate in the general defence scheme. It may then have to defend its premises by taking station a mile or more away. In general, factories will continue to work even in the event of invasion, and the Home Guard duties will be principally observation and anti-sabotage. If and when the enemy draws near, the factory Home Guard will cease production and function as part of the local defence scheme. Nevertheless, defence schemes are subject to alteration, and such exercises as this should not be overlooked.]

It is doubly important to hold a factory or works against the enemy; first to deny him occupation for either use or sabotage, and second to prevent him using the building as a temporary fortification and shelter to further his occupation of the whole town by infiltration.

The factory shown in the diagram has a fairly typical lay-out in that it faces a busy street and built-up area, is surrounded by its own fenced-in yards, and backs on to fields. The defence of factories which are closely hemmed in by other

buildings involves the fortification and garrisoning of some of these buildings, patrols in vehicles or on foot, and, from the first, close-quarter fighting with such short range weapons as the tommy gun, the hand grenade and the rifle and bayonet. It can only to a limited extent be planned in advance, and training should proceed along the lines indicated in *Street Fighting*. (See pp. 51-53.)

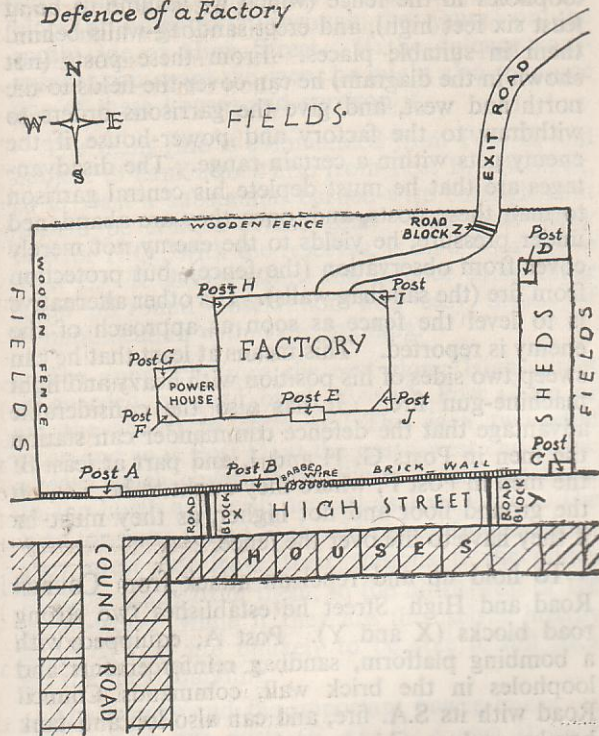
In order to hold successfully a factory such as that shown in the diagram the defence commander must first realise that he is liable to be attacked from any side or from all sides at once: this includes air attack. So far as possible, then, he must site his posts to give each a field of fire on two or three sides.

He will doubtless consider the establishment of outposts in the fields outside the factory premises, but it is unlikely that he would be able to dig communication trenches across the factory yard to afford the outposts a fair chance of retiring under pressure. If he can do this, all the better. Otherwise he must make up his mind to resist enemy attacks from all sides mainly by fire from posts in the factory building, power-house and sheds.

The wooden fence running round the yard presents a problem; it affords an approaching enemy cover from observation and enables him to get to comparatively close quarters. On the other hand, it would yield little protection against fire

Diagram 9

Defence of a Factory



to any posts he might establish there. The defence commander has two alternatives. He can make loopholes in the fence (which we assume to be at least six feet high), and erect sandbag-walls behind them in suitable places. From these posts (not shown in the diagram) he can cover the fields to the north and west, and give the garrisons orders to withdraw to the factory and power-house if the enemy gets within a certain range. The disadvantages are that he must deplete his central garrison to man these posts, and, once they are abandoned under pressure, he yields to the enemy not merely cover from observation (the fence), but protection from fire (the sandbag walls). His other alternative is to level the fence as soon as approach of the enemy is reported. This means at least that he can sweep two sides of his position with heavy and light machine-gun fire. It has also the considerable advantage that the defence commander can station the men in Posts G, H and I, and part at least of the men in Post F, where they ought to be, i.e., on the ground floor and not higher, as they must be if they have to fire over the fence.

To hold up and repel an attack from Council Road and High Street he establishes two strong road blocks (X and Y). Post A, equipped with a bombing platform, sandbag reinforcements and loopholes in the brick wall, commands Council Road with its S.A. fire, and can also lob anti-tank bombs, and possibly grenades, on the enemy held

up by road block X. Post B is the second garrison for this road block; it should be equipped also with tommy guns in case the enemy forces the block or outflanks it through the houses on the south side of High Street. If the defence commander can spare the men, he might also reinforce one of these houses and garrison it.

The main gate is commanded from Post E, and subject to flank attack also from Post B. A block, or at least a substantial barbed-wire entanglement should be erected at the gate. The most likely site for H.Q., with the reserves, is on a floor above Post E. It should afford the defence commander good all-round observation and easy means of communication within the building.

The approach from the east along High Street is guarded by road block Y, with Post C (in or on the sheds) to cover it. This is a two-sided post, and so is Post D, at the north-west end of the sheds, which covers Road Block Z and the fields to the north and east, as well as Exit Road. The men for posts C and D should be carefully chosen; they must not leave their stations if the attack develops away from them, to the north-west or the south-west; while if they are themselves heavily attacked they are unlikely to be able to fall back on the main building.

The factory and the important power house are guarded by five posts (F. G. H. I and J), each

120 ADVANCED TRAINING FOR HOME GUARD

commanding two sides, as well as by Post E facing the main gate. The siting, arrangements and use of these posts should follow the principles indicated in *Street Fighting* (p. 53), i.e. riflemen and machine gunners on the ground floor and/or first floor, observers under or on the roof, and the supplies in the cellars. The walls alone should not be relied on to give protection from fire; muzzles should not project from loopholes; and rooms should be darkened.

For the adequate defence of a factory of any size, at least two platoons are necessary. The enemy should be of approximately the same strength or even more. The exercise will be more valuable if the enemy is given transport and, after the initial stage of the attack, splits into two or more parties, attacking from several sides simultaneously.

Field Exercise No. 7

A SMALL ENEMY PARTY IN A CHALK PIT IS ATTACKED WITH MACHINE GUNS AND HAND GRENADES

(See Diagram 10)

THIS exercise is suitable for two or three sections. One represents a small body of the enemy which has been driven by exhaustion, or after suffering casualties elsewhere, to go to ground in a chalk (or sand) pit or some similar place of shelter. The other two sections (or half sections) represent the attacking Home Guard, ordered out after the enemy's position has been observed and reported.

The chief difficulty confronting the attacking commander is how to "get at" the enemy, who has cover for himself from fire, yet can command all approaches to the pit. The solution is to make the enemy keep their heads low long enough for the grenade throwers to get within range.

Both attacking sections proceed by road, using cars for speed, and the rising bank for cover, to a point between the tall tree and the cottage (see foot of diagram). Here the machine-gun party leaves the cars, and sets up its gun, training it on

the chalk pit. It does not yet open fire unless the enemy attempts to leave the chalk pit.

The bombing party with their grenades do not stop here (unless to confirm details of their co-operation) but proceed in cars by the circuitous road route (assumed to be off the diagram) until they reach the eastern edge of the spinney, out of sight of the enemy.

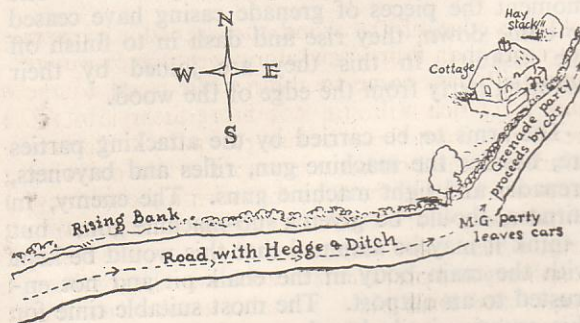
The bombing party proceeds cautiously and quietly through the wood, with flank, forward and rear guards. For the purpose of the exercise the enemy, although exhausted, need not be assumed to be quiescent. He should put out outposts in the spinney and perhaps in the ditch. It will be the task of the approaching grenade party then to overcome these sentries, if possible by stalking and in silence, before proceeding further.

At the edge of the wood the grenade throwers (not more than four) crawl along the ditch or water-course till they come to the nearest point to the chalk pit which will still not bring them into the line of fire from the machine-gun party. The remainder of the bomber party split into a covering rear guard holding the ditch (but within the spinney) behind the grenade throwers, and another covering party, which takes post on the southern edge of the spinney and prepares to open fire on the southern edge of the chalk pit. It is this second covering party which receives the pre-arranged signal from



Diagram 10

Small enemy party in Chalk Pit is attacked with machine-gun and hand-grenades.



the grenade throwers that they are in position, and transmits it across country to the machine-gun party.

As soon as this signal is received the machine-gun party opens fire on the chalk pit (but taking care to avoid the ditch on the eastern flank). At the same time, from closer range, the covering party on the edge of the wood opens fire with rifle and light machine gun, also on the chalk pit. This should startle the enemy, confuse him and make him keep his head down. The firing persists only for a pre-arranged length of time—twenty seconds should be ample. As soon as it stops, the grenade throwers dash out of their ditch and at twenty yards range hurl their grenades into the chalk pit, immediately flinging themselves flat on the ground and getting their rifles into position. The moment the pieces of grenade casing have ceased to come down, they rise and dash in to finish off the assault. In this they are joined by their covering party from the edge of the wood.

The arms to be carried by the attacking parties are, besides the machine gun, rifles and bayonets, grenades and light machine guns. The enemy, in fairness, should be given a sub-machine gun, but I think it may be assumed that this would be kept with the main body in the chalk pit and not entrusted to an outpost. The most suitable time for this exercise is dusk, when such an enemy party

would be most likely to seek cover for a few hours' rest. Co-operation and co-ordination between the machine-gun team and the grenade party is not easy to perfect. The exercise should also test the visual signalling system in use.

NOTE.—If a small building takes the place of the chalk pit, two machine-gun posts may be necessary to provide sufficient covering fire. Mortars and smoke bombs should also be considered.

Field Exercise No. 8

ATTACK ON AIR-BORNE TROOPS

(See Diagram 11)

A LARGE and fairly flat field (Fairmeadow in the diagram) is chosen by the enemy, who set out to seize it and use it as an airfield for fighter planes. Their method is to drop parachutists in three adjoining fields (King, Queen and Knave Fields), and five minutes later three troop-carrying planes are crash-landed in Fairmeadow itself. The parachutists gather their arms together and proceed to establish defence posts round Fairmeadow to the north and east, i.e. to cut off and hold Fairmeadow. The enemy disembarking from the troop carriers drag these planes to the edge of Fairmeadow, while some of them hasten to set up defence posts at the south-east corner and to sabotage the railway.

In view of the fact that Nazi parachutists may use uniform difficult to distinguish from our own, enemy troops for this exercise should not carry a distinguishing mark, and the troop-carrying planes can be represented by farm wagons or cars.

At zero hour the Home Guard commander receives a message from his observation post, by

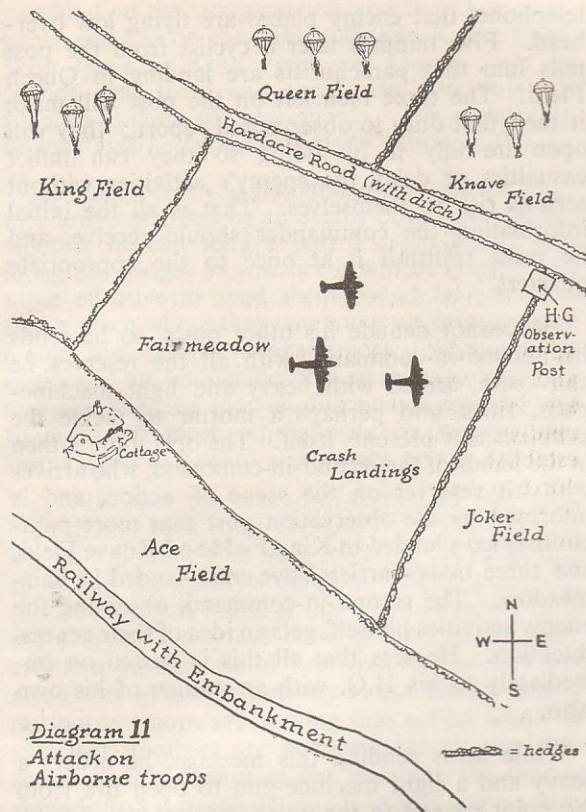


Diagram 11
Attack on
Airborne troops

telephone, that enemy planes are flying low overhead. Five minutes later a cyclist from the post tells him that parachutists are landing in Queen Field. The three men left on the post will make it their first duty to observe and report; they will open fire only if by doing so they can inflict casualties or delay the enemy's activities without serious risk to themselves. That is all the initial information the commander should receive, and he must transmit it at once to the appropriate quarters.

He cannot denude his other posts, so he sends his second-in-command, with all the reserves he can spare, armed with heavy and light machine-guns, rifles, and perhaps a mortar to tackle the problem as it presents itself. The operation is then in the hands of the second-in-command, who arrives with his reserves on the scene of action, and is informed by the observation post that more parachutists have landed in King Field and Knave Field, and three troop-carriers have crash-landed in Fairmeadow. The second-in-command, observing the enemy activities himself, gets an idea of their general intention. He sees that all this is passed on immediately to his H.Q. with an outline of his own plan.

While he is sending this message, he orders a heavy and a light machine-gun to open fire from the point nearest to the north-east corner of Fair-

meadow, on the troop-carriers and their late occupants, and also on the parachutists in Knave Field. With those in King Field and Queen Field he cannot deal there and then. He also puts out riflemen as flank and rear-guards. Despite all this, he may well be driven east along Hardacre Road.

He then perceives that the south-east of Fairmeadow is guarded by an enemy post. He decides whether he can send a patrol to stalk this post along the hedges or whether it will be quicker and more effective to send them round by road and find a place where they can come up from the east along the railway embankment. Whatever he decides to do, he includes in a message to his H.Q., and also suggests that reinforcements may be able to approach most satisfactorily by railway, but warns them to beware of sabotage on the line.

A little later the second-in-command may have been driven back some distance from Fairmeadow, but he will know that he is inflicting casualties and spreading the enemy's defences. After a time he should be sent a message that reinforcements from the Regular Army are coming through by road, and that an increase of fire from the railway will mean that either the Railway Home Guard unit or rail-borne troops are coming into action here. If sufficient numbers are not available to give substance to this change in the situation, the umpire should effect it by informing the enemy commander.

The second-in-command and his detached section (sent by hedge or road towards the railway) should then be able to advance again.

The defence commander's object is to observe and report, then to delay and harass: only when adequate reinforcements come up can he enlarge this to an attack. And his attacks (in co-operation with the reinforcements) should be planned to mop up the enemy dispositions, not all at once, but part by part. The principles of this operation are: (a) the Home Guard must not bite off more than it can chew or try to operate on too wide a front: it should be prepared to retire, inflicting casualties, until reinforcements arrive; (b) it should work from one or two sides only of an enemy landing; a surrounding operation is only likely to weaken its effort; (c) when reinforced, it should attack the enemy, necessarily dispersed, one part after another. In the exercise based on this diagram, for example, the concluding stages of the operation would be the mopping-up of the posts established by the troop-carrier enemy, and then of the parachutists landed in Queen Field and King Field, who should be left till then to guard flanks which will not be attacked in the first stages. Some of these may take refuge for a last stand in the cottage at the south-west corner of Fairmeadow.

Two sections can be set against two sections for this exercise, but if others are available later to re-

inforce the defence, the enemy strength can be increased to a platoon or more. Some anti-tank weapons may be carried in case the troop-carriers claim to have landed light tanks. The parachutists should be armed with tommy guns and grenades, and unless they take over quickly they may be put out of action by the Home Guard, operating from a greater range than tommy guns will carry, before they can get their heavier guns into action. The umpires should take careful note of the times at which the initial stages of the operation begin, and in subsequent practice every effort should be made to open fire at the earliest possible moment. For this, not only quick and accurate reporting is needed, but immediate decisions by the commander on the spot.

[*Note.*—For this exercise it is assumed that regular troops, probably with armoured fighting vehicles, are at hand. Home Guard commanders in country districts where such reinforcements are not immediately available would do well to form a Company Reserve, motorised, as a striking force against parachutists. If they obtain authority to armour-plate one or two cars (see page 58) these may fight from the road-side or on occasion enter fields to crush machine-gun posts established by parachutists.]

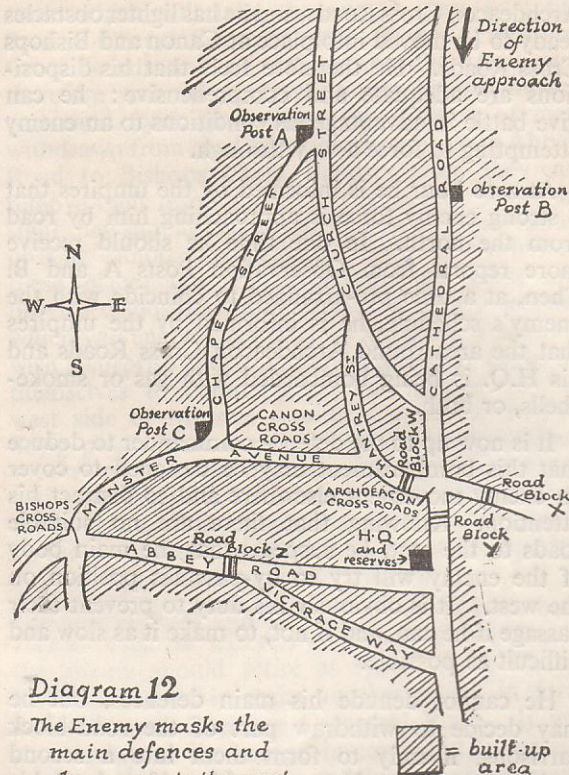
Field Exercise No. 9

THE ENEMY MASKS THE MAIN DEFENCES AND BY-PASSES TO THE WEST

(See Diagram 12)

The Home Guard here has for its principal task the defence of a village or the outskirts of a town. The main thoroughfare is Cathedral Road, on which Church Street converges. Observation Posts A and B are established to the north on these roads. The main defences are sited further south, at Archdeacon Cross-roads, because Chantry Street affords another entry to Cathedral Road. These main defences consist of road blocks W., X and Y, to the rear of which is H.Q. with the reserves. The approach from the west, along Abbey Road and Vicarage Way, is protected by Road Block Z. Further south is assumed to be guarded by another unit.

The defence commander has been given the object of holding up the enemy attack from the north towards Archdeacon Cross Roads, and also to delay and harass any attempt to traverse his area apart from this. His main defences are round

*Diagram 12*

The Enemy masks the main defences and by-passes to the west.

hatched area = built-up area

Archdeacon Cross Roads, and he has lighter obstacles ready to be moved into place at Canon and Bishops Cross Roads. He therefore feels that his dispositions are adequate and comprehensive: he can give battle in advantageous conditions to an enemy attempting to force a way through.

At zero hour he is informed by the umpires that a strong enemy force is approaching him by road from the north. In due time he should receive more reports from Observation Posts A and B. Then, at a time pre-arranged to coincide with the enemy's schedule, he is informed by the umpires that the area round Archdeacon Cross Roads and his H.Q. is being bombarded with gas or smoke-shells, or both.

It is now up to the defence commander to deduce that this bombardment may be designed to cover an enemy movement elsewhere and to distract his attention. Knowing that there are no suitable roads to the east, he suspects that the main body of the enemy will try to by-pass his position on the west. It is obviously his duty to prevent their passage if he can, and if not, to make it as slow and difficult as possible.

He cannot denude his main defences, but he may decide to withdraw part of the road-block garrisons, if only to form them into a second mobile reserve at H.Q. He himself and all his men must now be wearing respirators. The only

route which will take the enemy clear past his flank is Chapel Street, Minster Avenue to Bishops Cross Roads and so on southwards. He must therefore rush his reserves, under his second-in-command (with or without the addition of men withdrawn from road-block garrisons), along Abbey Road to Bishops Cross Roads. There they can remove their respirators. If the enemy is not in sight they should make their way to the observation post at Canon Cross Roads. At one or other of these places the second-in-command must improvise dispositions and erect the light obstacles which will enable his men to give battle, if possible with a surprise effect, but without unduly exposing themselves to counter-fire. The houses on the west side of Minster Avenue should be used as firing points, and the fight should be maintained southward from the opposite side with short-range anti-tank weapons. If obstacles can be erected in the roadway, all the better, but the materials should be those which are at hand there normally, or wire, etc., carried with the mobile reserves.

If the umpires adjudge the enemy to have been turned back at Bishops or Canon Cross Roads, the enemy should retire at speed along Chapel Street and quickly make another attack in force down Church Street or Cathedral Road. It will then be up to the second-in-command to leave a small garrison on the scene of the first engagement, and take his reserves back to H.Q., where the

defence commander will need them for holding road-blocks W, Y and Z.

The exercise is intended to test the application of the principle of Local Mobility, the alertness and adaptability of commanders, and the qualities of the men under their command in the face of a changing situation and unexpected disclosures of the enemy's intention.

Field Exercise No. 10

THE PINCERS MOVEMENT AND COUNTERSTROKE

(See Diagram 13)

THIS exercise is suitable for both town and country units, and is well worth practising because, although the expression "pincers movement" belongs properly to strategy, Germans meeting a Home Guard centre of resistance are quite likely to employ a double, converging attack with the object of enclosing the defences by a part of their forces—which will be left behind for this purpose, while the remainder moves on by a by-road. It is most important that Home Guard units should anticipate this, and discover in practice the method of defeating the enemy's intention most suitable to their own particular terrain.

If the enemy appears in such force that he can afford to unloose a detachment to deal with the resistance, the local Home Guard can do only one useful thing about his main force: observe closely and report quickly and accurately. The next thing for the unit commander to decide is whether he can afford to give battle from his defences against

the enemy detachment with a fair prospect of destroying them or at least of repulsing them. Moreover, he must make this decision in good time to allow him (if he is in danger of being overwhelmed) to withdraw his men and carry on the fight elsewhere. Orders from higher authority may lift from him the responsibility of making the decision: it may very well be his duty to stand his ground and fight it out against whatever force the enemy can bring against him. But if he is exercising an independent command, he must obtain all the early, accurate information about the enemy he can, because whether he decides to stand and fight or to make a withdrawal and take up for the time being a guerilla rôle, his decision must be swiftly but not lightly made. For this exercise the defence commander is assumed to have such an independent command and full responsibility for the movements of his men.

There will be only a minority of Home Guard positions which are not liable to a converging attack. In the diagram the road system may be either in a built-up area or in open country. The enemy, in unknown force, but moving by mechanical transport, has been heard of in the north proceeding southward. The defence commander's rear is adequately covered by other dispositions, omitted from the diagram to simplify it.

Realising that the enemy may approach by way

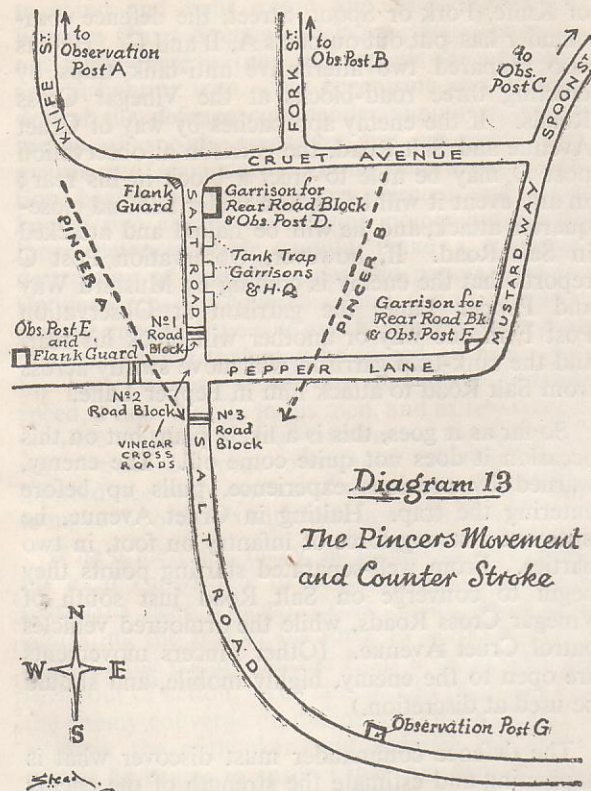


Diagram 13

*The Pincers Movement
and Counter Stroke*

of Knife, Fork or Spoon Street, the defence commander has put out outposts A, B and C. He has also prepared two alternative anti-tank traps by erecting three road-blocks at the Vinegar Cross Roads. If the enemy approaches by way of Cruet Avenue and Salt Road, the garrison at observation post D may be able to erect a block in his rear; in any event it will bring him under fire and close-quarter attack, and he will be halted and attacked in Salt Road. If, however, Observation Post C reports that the enemy is coming by Mustard Way and Pepper Lane, the garrison at Observation Post F in one way or another will block his rear, and the tank-trap garrison will move swiftly across from Salt Road to attack him in Pepper Lane.

So far as it goes, this is a likely plan, but on this occasion it does not quite come off. The enemy, warned by previous experience, pulls up before entering the trap. Halting in Cruet Avenue, he puts out a strong force of infantry on foot, in two parties. From well-separated starting points they begin to converge on Salt Road just south of Vinegar Cross Roads, while the armoured vehicles patrol Cruet Avenue. (Other pincers movements are open to the enemy, highly mobile, and should be used at discretion.)

The defence commander must discover what is happening and estimate the strength of the enemy in relation to his own. Then he must decide either

to stand and fight round and about Salt Road between Cruet Avenue and Pepper Lane or to get out while there is time to keep his men together and in fighting trim. For organising such a withdrawal the defence commander should use every means of speedy transport and maintain flank guards and rear-guard. (Long before the operation begins he should have selected and made known two alternative rallying points outside his inner defences.) He should make a "token" destruction of valuable stores and papers, and use smoke-bombs (to cover his retreat) and grenades, tommy guns and the rifle and bayonet for any close quarter fighting that may be forced on him. But his principal aim should be immediate decision, speed, a high morale in his men, and as few risks as possible until he is ready to renew the fight. It will depend on local topography whether or not he needs a simple system of signal communications to make the order to withdraw immediately effective.

If he is alert and lucky, he should be able, using his local knowledge, to hold the enemy with his rearguard near Vinegar Cross Roads, while concentrating the rest of his force to surprise one or other of the enemy pincers from a flank, and put them out of action. His aim should then be to let the enemy converge on defences no longer held, to outflank the outflanker, and surprise the enemy just as he begins to suspect that his own surprise has failed.

Just to make things more difficult, the umpires should see that the defence commander receives—at a hard-pressed moment—from two of his outer observation posts reports of the movement of the main enemy body which has sent a detachment to attack him. These reports he must pass on *at once* to the appropriate quarters.

For this exercise the Home Guard unit which will in action be responsible for the defences should act as a whole, and the enemy should be drawn, in equal strength at least, from another Home Guard unit or from regular troops.



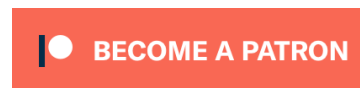
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